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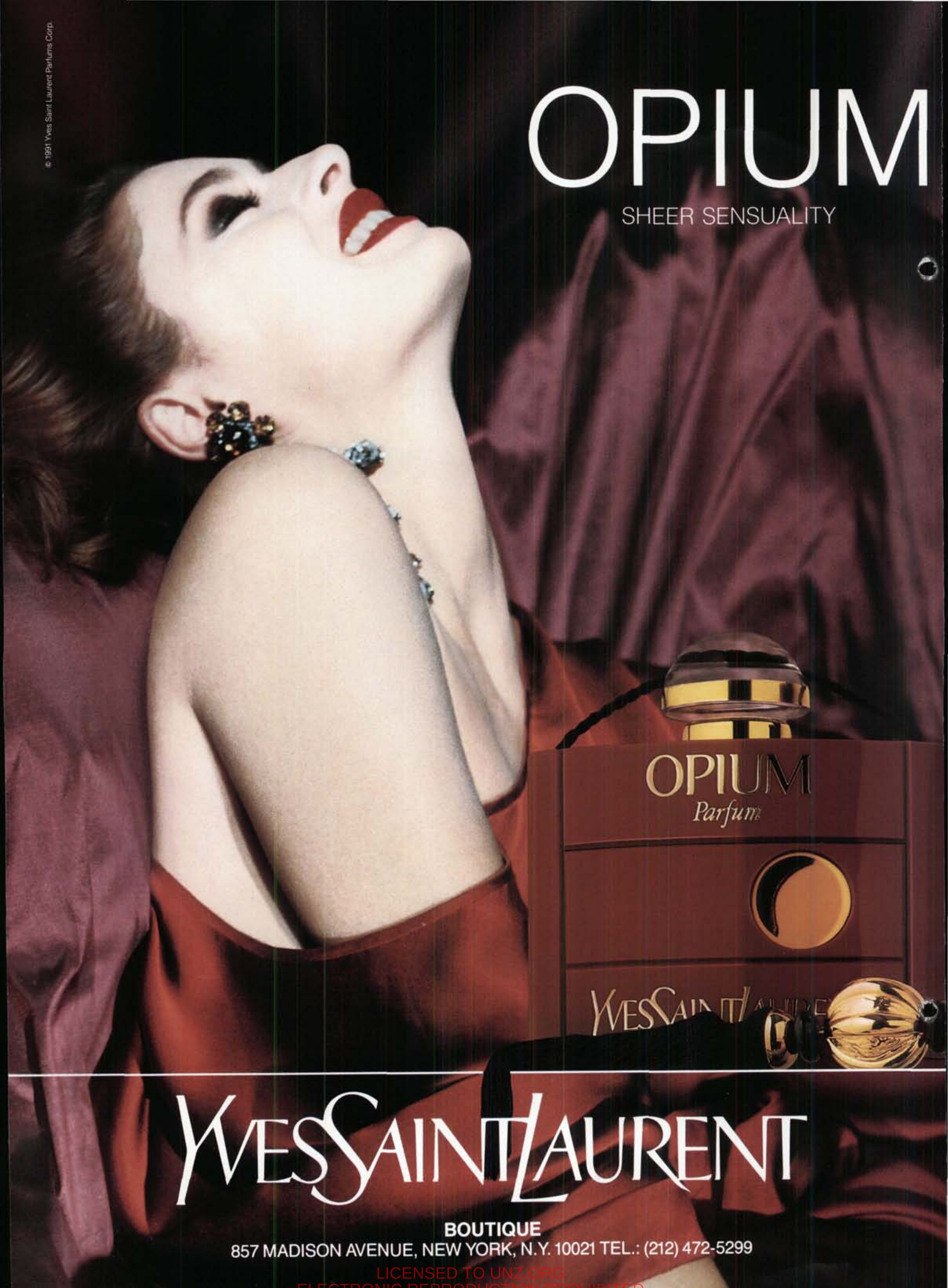
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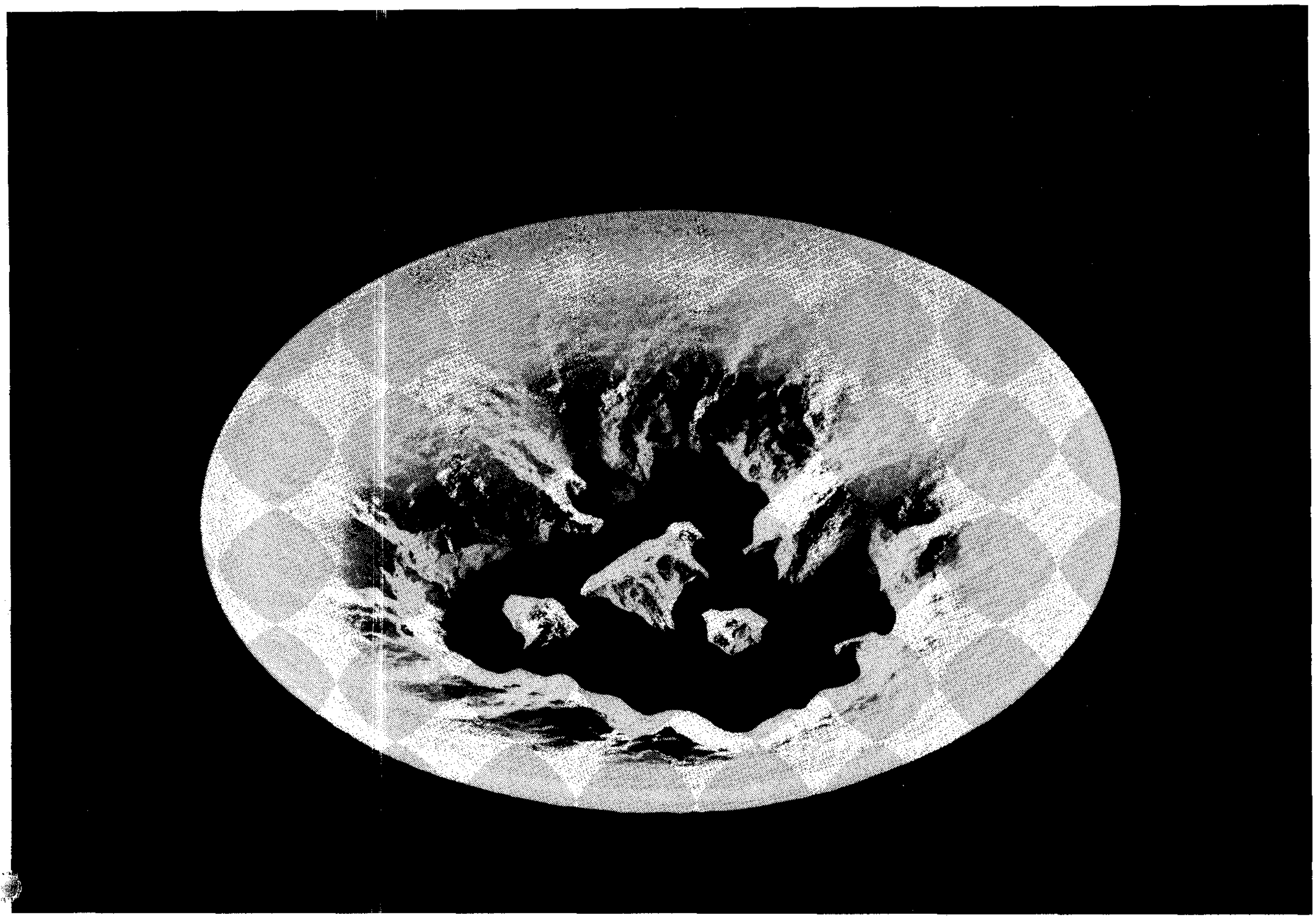

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

LAST week, we drew your attention to the Signature Theatre Company's production of "Heathen Valley." This week, we thought we'd spotlight the efforts of two more of our favorite hip, young companies.

Naked Angels, which likes to stage evenings of short original plays on a single topic, shifted into high gear last week with another one of its issues-fests. The subject this year is human rights. The program, which includes works by Jon Robin Baitz, Ariel Dorfman, Ned Eisenberg, Charles Fuller, Jan Jalenak, Nathaniel Kahn, C. M. Kaplan, Craig Lucas, Warren Leight, Kenneth Lonergan, Pippin Parker, and Frank Pugliese, is a co-production with Amnesty International. "Naked Rights" will run through December 21 at the Space, 114 West 17th Street, with days off on December 11 and 17. Tickets are ten dollars, except on the fourteenth and the twenty-first, which are benefit performances.

A few blocks uptown, at the Atlantic Theatre, the newly formed Common Ground Stage and Film Company launches itself into existence this week with a revival of David Mamet's "Sexual Perversity in Chicago," staged by the Atlantic's artistic director, Scott Zigler.

The play, which opens on the twelfth and runs through the twenty-first, has not had a major revival in many years. So we asked Mr. Zigler if he thought this production would constitute one. He replied that in his book any play with bell-bottoms in it constituted a major revival. Meanwhile, members of the Common Ground have high hopes. They paid for the space that they are renting in the theatre at 336 West 20th Street by crewing for the Atlantic's recent production of "Distant Fires," which reopens Off Broadway next month.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL—Patrick Stewart performs a solo version of the Dickens classic. Previews begin Dec. 17. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

CIRCLE REPERTORY COMPANY—Mason Adams, Joan Copeland, Larry Keith, and Ruby Holbrook star in **THE ROSE QUARTET**, a play written by Tom Cumella and directed by Tee Scatuorchio. Previews through Dec. 15. Opens Dec. 17 at 8, and runs through Dec. 29. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

THE CRUCIBLE—The National Actors Theatre (founded by Tony Randall) débuts with a revival of the Arthur Miller play. With Madeleine Potter, Martin Sheen, Fritz Weaver, Carol Woods, and Michael York, among others. Opens Dec. 10 at 8. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DEARLY DEPARTED—A new play by David Bottrell and Jessie Jones. The cast includes Dylan Baker, Mary Fogarty, and Sloane Shelton. Directed by Gloria Muzio. Previews through Dec. 15. Opens Dec. 16 at 7. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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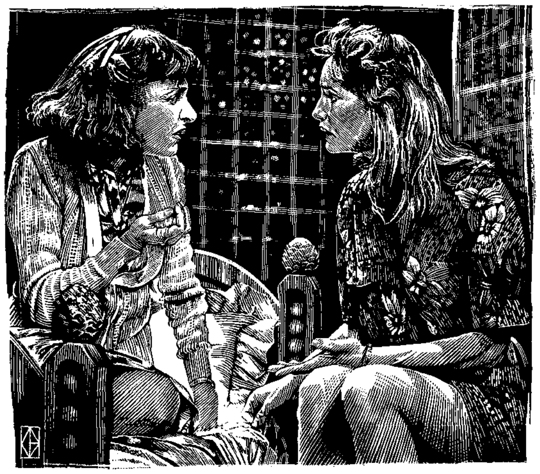
15	16	17	18			

THE DON JUAN AND THE NON DON JUAN—A new musical by Neil Radisch, James Milton, and David Goldstein, which is based on two novels by Marvin Cohen. With Joseph Adams, Monica Carr, Vicki Lewis, Karen Mason, and Polly Pen. Evan Yionoulis was the director. Previews through Dec. 17. Opens Dec. 18 at 8. (Vineyard Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 353-3874.)

FINKEL'S FOLLIES—A show billed as "a new American musical vaudeville," conceived by and starring Fyvush Finkel. Previews through Dec. 14. Opens Dec. 15 at 3. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

I WON'T DANCE: STEVE ROSS SINGS FRED ASTAIRE—Mr. Ross in an "all-singing, all-playing, non-dancing" tribute. Previews Dec. 10-11. Opens Dec. 12 at 6:45. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call 688-7253.)



Laura Esterman and Lisa Emery in "Marvin's Room"

RAFT OF THE MEDUSA—A new play by Joe Pintauro; directed by Sal Trapani. In previews. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

TWO SHAKESPEAREAN ACTORS—Brian Bedford and Victor Garber star in Richard Nelson's play about the rivalry between the nineteenth-century actors William Macready (a Brit) and Edwin Forrest (a Yank). Jack O'Brien directed; the cast also includes Željko Ivanek, Frances Conroy, Judy Kuhn, James Murtaugh, and Eric Stoltz. The show originated in England. Previews begin Dec. 17. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BEAU JEST—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

BLUEBEARD—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company revives Charles Ludlam's 1970 play. (Charles Ludlam, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

BON APPÉTIT!—Jean Stapleton in two short operas by Lee Hoiby. The first is a musical staging of Ruth Draper's monologue "The Italian Lesson"; the second is a setting of a Julia Child cooking lesson. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Dec. 15.)

BREAKING LEGS—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Ronald Maccone, Nick Wyman, and, above all, Susan Giosa as the daughter who spins the plot. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY—A comedic tribute to the Borscht Belt, starring Freddie Roman, Marilyn Michaels, Mal Z. Lawrence, and Dick Capri. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

COLE AND COWARD: JULIE WILSON WITH WILLIAM ROY—Porter and Noël, by the singer and her accompanist. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

DANCING AT LUGHNASA—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE DROPPER—A play by Ron McLarty. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

FREE SPEECH IN AMERICA—Essayist Roger Rosenblatt in a one-man show. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes Dec. 29.)

FROM THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA—In eleven scenes, Endesha Ida Mae Holland dramatizes her own rise (and journey) from the Delta (where she had been a teen-age prostitute) to the University of Minnesota and triumph in academia. The leading character, though, is her mother, a midwife called Aint Baby, who is very well portrayed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce. The role of the author is split between Ms. Bruce, Sybil Walker, and Jacqueline Williams, and the result is a lively and merry evening. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

HEATHEN VALLEY—A production of Romulus Linney's play, directed by James Houghton and the playwright himself. Presented by the Signature Theatre Company. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. Closes Dec. 22. For reservations, call 262-1647.)

JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY—Presenting three plays in rotating repertory: Thornton Wilder's **SKIN OF OUR TEETH**, George Bernard Shaw's **GENEVA**, and Bertolt Brecht's **GALILEO**. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

JUST A NIGHT OUT—A musical by Richard V. and Susan W. Turner. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

LIPS TOGETHER, TEETH APART—Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Hillary Bailey Smith, Jonathan Hadary, Roxanne Hart, and Anthony Heald; directed by John Tillinger. (7/8/91) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

MAD FOREST—A 1990 play by Caryl Churchill, presented by New York Theatre Workshop. Directed by Mark Wing-Davey. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 302-6989. Closes Dec. 29.)

MARVIN'S ROOM—A play by Scott McPherson about a family reunited after a long estrangement. Featuring Lisa Emery and Laura Esterman. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

MISS SAIGON—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

NICK & NORA—Barry Bostwick and Joanna Gleason are Nick and Nora Charles in this musical murder mystery—inspired by Dashiell Hammett's "Thin Man" characters—by Arthur Laurents (book), Charles Strouse (score), and Richard Maltby, Jr. (lyrics). Mr. Laurents directed. Also with Christine Baranski and Chris Sarandon. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

NO CURE FOR CANCER—Denis Leary's one-man show, which received its première at last summer's Edinburgh Festival. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

ON BORROWED TIME—A first-rate revival of Paul Osborn's charming fantasy, which was originally done here in 1938. George C. Scott is Gramps; Teresa Wright is his wife; Matthew Porac is his little grandson; and Nathan Lane is Death, whom he traps in an apple tree. All of them are splendid. Mr. Scott directed. (10/21/91) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

PAGEANT—A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

PARK YOUR CAR IN HARVARD YARD—Jason Robards, white-bearded and padded to portliness, plays a retired teacher, and Judith Ivey is a former student who gets a job as his housekeeper, in Israel Horovitz's very funny, touching play,

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Susan Giosa as "Angie"
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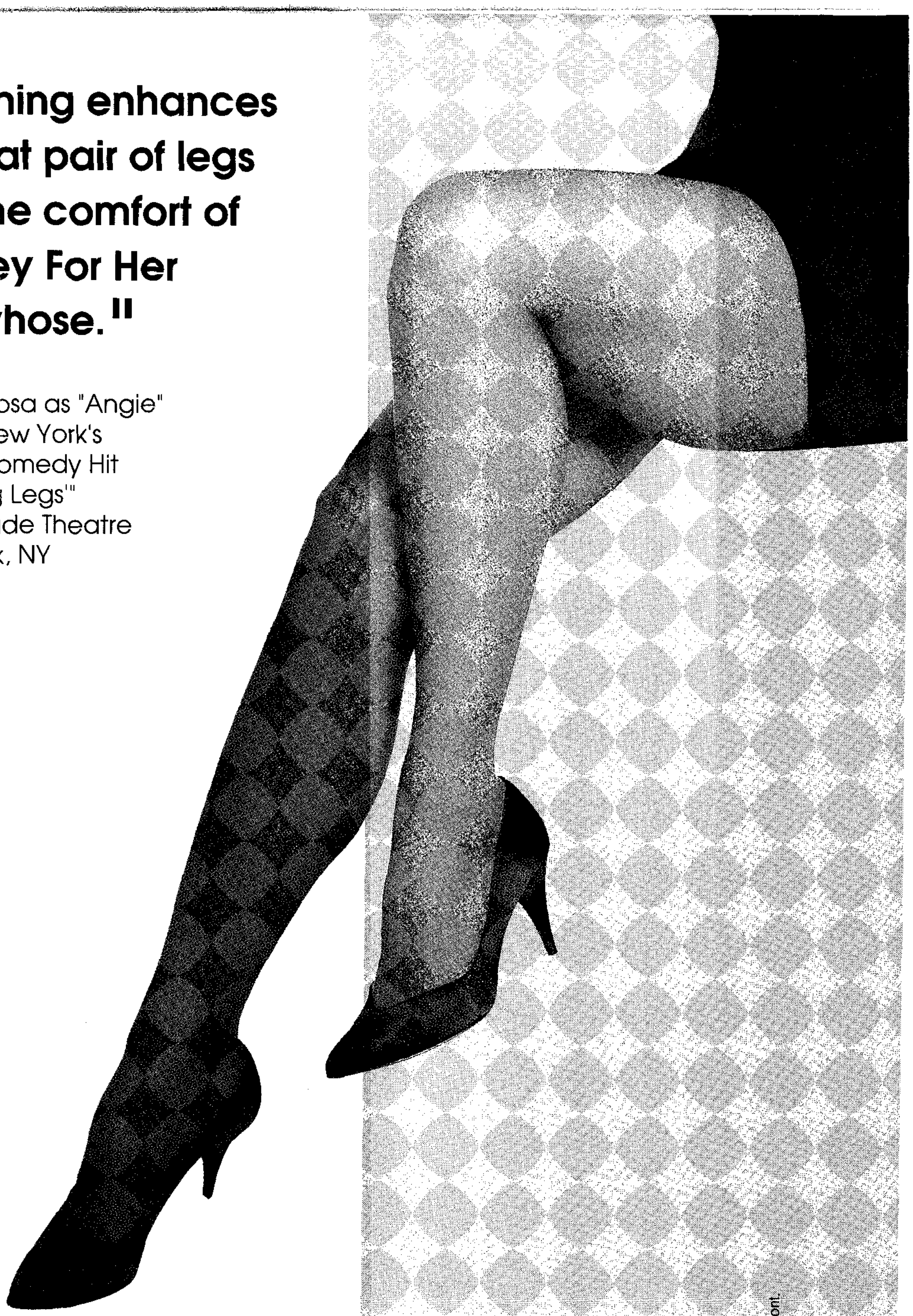

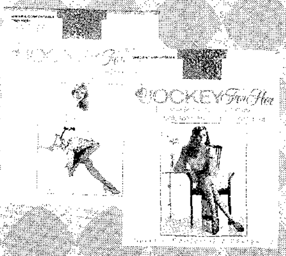

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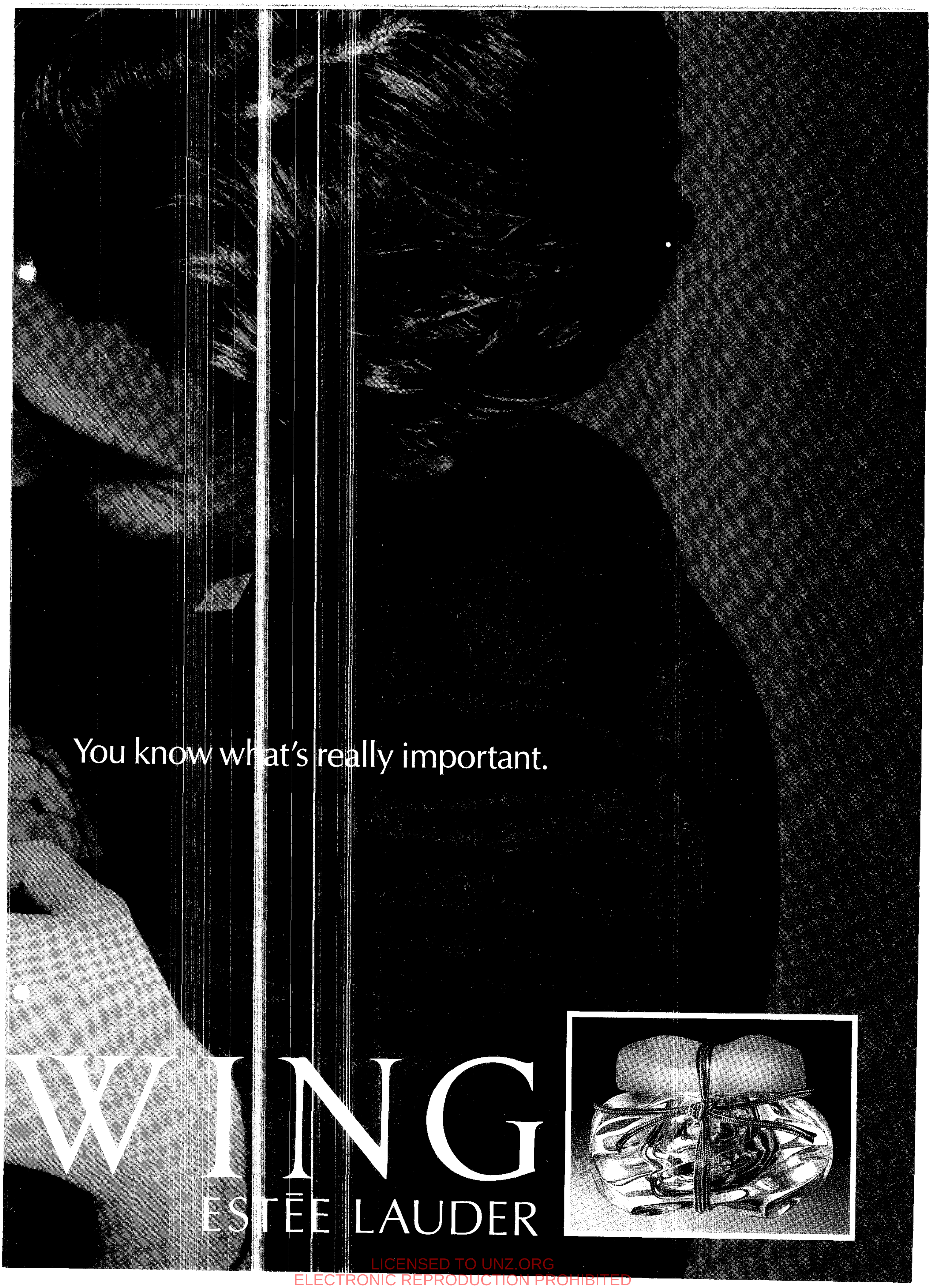
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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

which is set in Gloucester, Massachusetts, over a year's time. Under Zoe Caldwell's expert direction, the performances are as near to perfection as makes no matter. (11/18/91) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Penn & Teller Rot in Hell—The dynamic duo are performing their repertoire of tricks Off Broadway. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Pericles, Prince of Tyre—Michael Greif's lively, inventive staging of this problematic and rarely performed piece (and we've lost count of where this comes in the Shakespeare Marathon) really blew us away—mostly because the acting is so good; and in this case, good acting really means good casting. The stage is filled with interesting, capable actors whose grasp and love of the material is palpable and contagious. Chief among them is a startler named Byron Jennings, whom we had not seen before but hope to see again—many, many times. (12/9/91) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Dec. 22.)

Peter Pan—A return engagement of the production led by Cathy Rigby. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Rags—Ann Crumb, Philip Hoffman, and Crista Moore star in this revised version of the 1986 musical by Charles Strouse, Stephen Schwartz, and Joseph Stein. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre and directed by Richard Sabellico. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Dec. 29.)

The Real Live Brady Bunch—*Episodes from the* acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Return to the Forbidden Planet—Gabriel Barré, Julee Cruise, Robert McCormick, and Louis Tucci are all adorable in this light-minded entertainment, a London import that won the Laurence Olivier Award for best musical in a year when it might have gone to "Miss Saigon" (whose producer's indignation led to the creation of a new award category). The show—a patchwork of beloved pop songs stitched together with Shakespeareana—has almost nothing to do with the cult movie it is based on, and still less to do with "The Tempest." Written and directed by Bob Carlton, it is more than anything else an occasion to laugh a bit and rock out a lot. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

The Secret Garden—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Song of Singapore—A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. Another problem: on a busy night the seating arrangements here can be extremely cramped. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)

Times Square Angel: A Hard-Boiled Christmas Fantasy—Theatre-in-Limbo presents a revival of Charles Busch's holiday tale. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes Dec. 15.)

Tubes—A work by Blue Man Group. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

What About Luv?—Austin Pendleton, David Green, and Judy Kaye star in a revival of the musical version of Murray Schisgal's play "Luv." The book is by Jeffrey Sweet, the lyrics are by Susan Birkenhead, and the music is by Howard Marren. (York, 2 E. 90th St. 534-5366.)

The Will Rogers Follies—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

Zion!—The New Federal Theatre presents a work by Beverly Trader, which is billed as a "gospel play with music." (Theatre of the Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 869-3981. Closes Dec. 22.)

LONG RUNS

AND THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND: THE KANDER & EBB MUSICAL: A musical revue, with Karen Ziémba, Joel Blum, Terry Burrell, Marcus Lovett, and Marin Mazzie. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.). . .**CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.). . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.). . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.). . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** This revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the barbed lyrics. A holiday edition, "Forbidden Christmas," runs through Jan. 5. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.). . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.). . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **LOST IN YONKERS:** There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.). . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.). . . **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.). . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION:** You're best off knowing nothing about the John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, the director Jerry Zaks, and the actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, the individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

DANCE

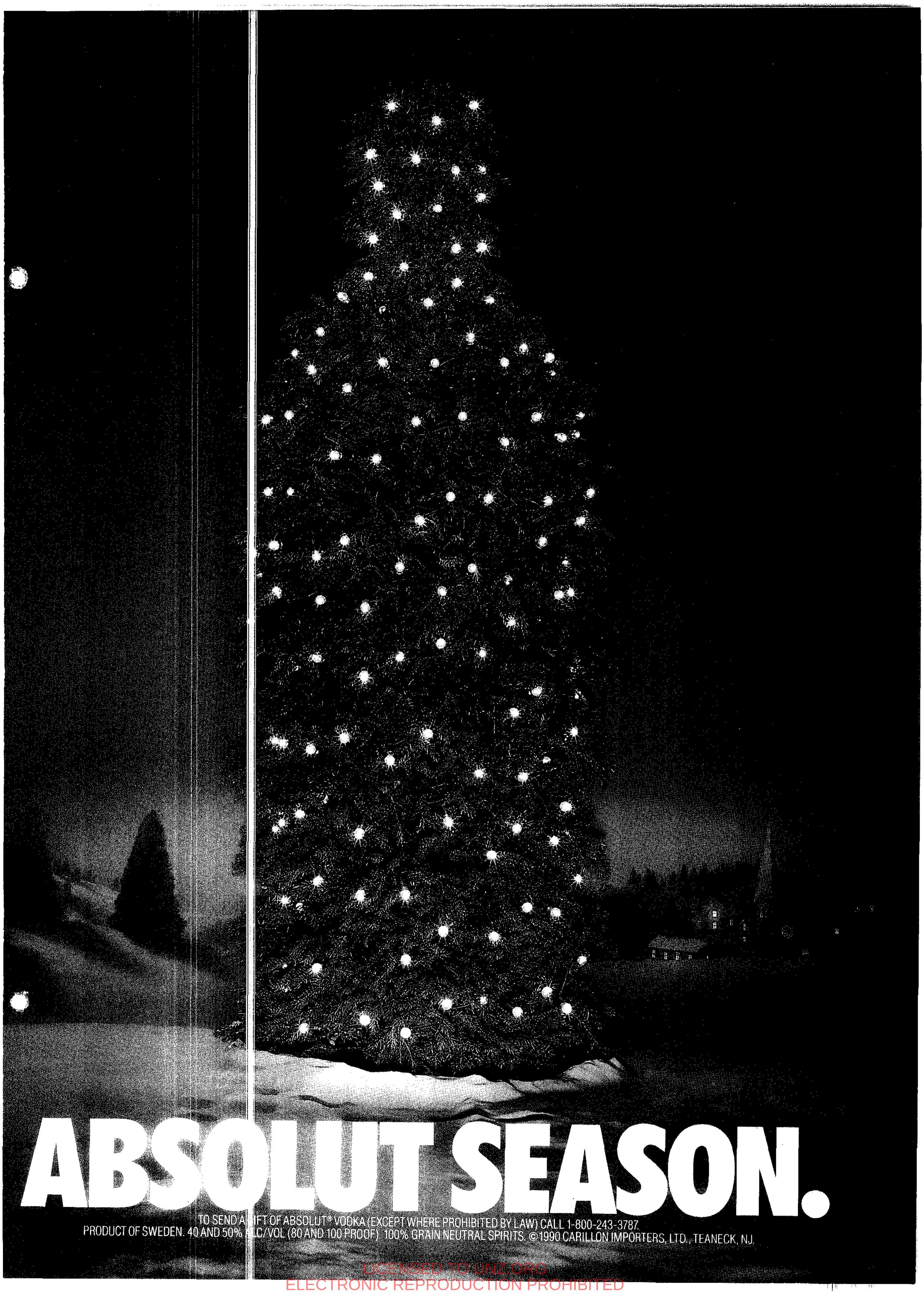
Elliot Caplan's recent ninety-five-minute documentary film, "Cage/Cunningham," takes you through a partnership going back over half a century without ever nudging you that a story is being told, or that a theory is being demonstrated, or that life is being X-rayed for the presence of art. Mr. Caplan has worked with the Merce Cunningham company since 1977 (he is now filmmaker-in-residence), and he shot "Cage/Cunningham" over a period of eight years, in places as remote from the company's West Village studio as India and South Korea. It was only by hanging around for so long that he was in a position to get such extraordinary sequences as the one that shows Mr. Cunningham warming up at a portable barre and whistling, while the stage lights that technicians around him are pre-setting intensify and darken. And yet every sequence seems to have a level of irony embedded in it, too. Take the one just mentioned. Here is a classic image of a theatrical dancer on tour—someone who could even be considered a classicist in some lights. Yet Mr. Cunningham has spent most of his career exploring the proposition that, apart from their coexistence in a predetermined running time, music and dancing have no organic relationship to each another. To watch him whistle while he works can't help making a fan smile.

There are more sources of delight here, such as the charm of John Cage's conversation, the beauty of the archival footage from the Cunningham repertoire (going back to a remarkable excerpt from the 1944 "Four Walls"), and the cerebral delicacy of the editing. Our favorite moment came when Mr. Cunningham related an anecdote about one of his performances with Martha Graham, while he was a member of her group. The two of them were holding hands and about to exit from the stage. Suddenly Miss Graham whispered to Mr. Cunningham that she wanted to try a new maneuver. "I just went with her," Mr. Cunningham said. He attributed his adaptiveness to his childhood dance teacher, Mrs. Barrett, and "her sense about the theatre." That is, "you have to be aware of what you're doing at any single moment, and don't think because *this* isn't what it is that you should worry about it. Just do it." Later, when Mr. Cunningham was reading Einstein, he came across the notion that there are no fixed points in space. And he thought about trying to make dances from that standpoint. And he just did it.

"Cage/Cunningham" will be shown at the Anthology Film Archives through December.

New York City Ballet—Presenting "The Nutcracker," through Jan. 5. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Dec. 10-12 and Dec. 17-18 at 6; Dec. 13 at 8; Dec. 14 at 2 and 8; and Dec. 15 at 1 and 5. The season continues through Feb. 23.)

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre—Dec. 10 at 7:30: "Escargot," "Rift" (première), and "Revelations.". . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 8: "Hidden



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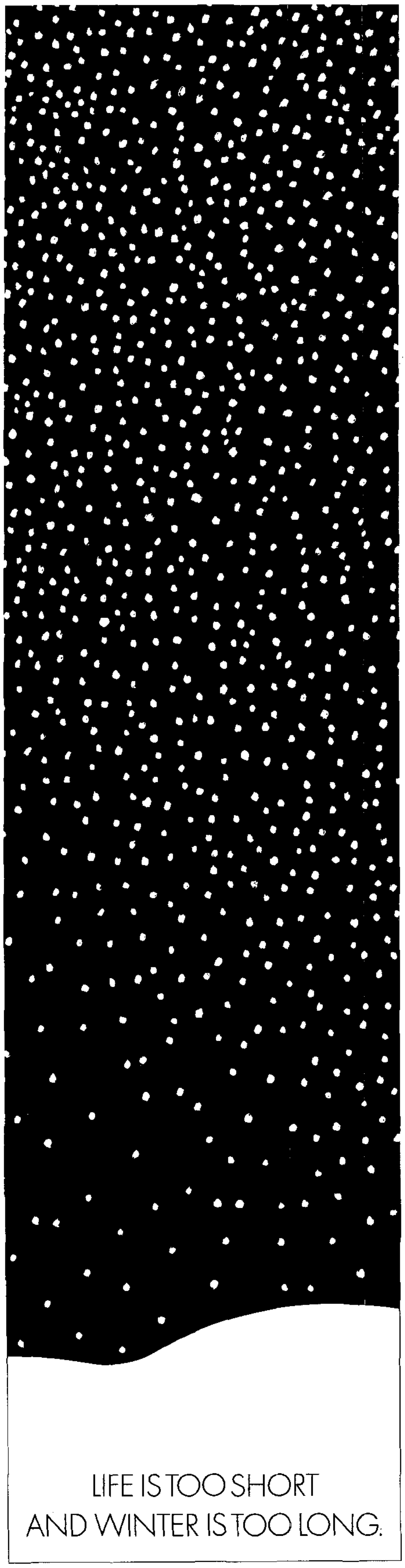

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DANCE—Cont'd

"Rites," "Episodes," and "Revelations."... ¶ Dec. 12 at 8: "Streams," "Pas de Duke," "Forgotten Time," and "The Stack-Up."... ¶ Dec. 13 at 8: "Escargot," "Reflections in D," "North Star," and "Revelations."... ¶ Dec. 14 at 2: "Shards," "Dance at the Gym," and "Memoria."... ¶ Dec. 14 at 8: "Streams," "Treading," "Rift," and "Revelations."... ¶ Dec. 15 at 3: "Blues Suite," "Hermit Songs," "Pas de Duke," "North Star," and "Escargot."... ¶ Dec. 15 at 8: "Revelations" and excerpts from "Memoria," "Night Creature," "Opus McShann," "For Bird with Love," "Cry," "Blues Suite," and "A Song for You."... ¶ Dec. 17 at 8: "Blues Suite," "Cry," "Masekela Langage," and "Revelations."... ¶ Dec. 18 at 8: "Streams," "Pas de Duke," "Hidden Rites," and "Memoria." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through Dec. 28.)

María Benítez Spanish Dance Company—Final performances of the engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 10-14 at 8 and Dec. 15 at 2 and 7:30.)

LadyGourd Sangoma—Presenting "Drumming with Body and Gourd." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Dec. 12-14 at 8 and Dec. 15 at 3.)

Momix—Opening performances of a three-week engagement. Dec. 17 at 8: "Passion" (première).... ¶ Dec. 18 at 8: A program of new and repertory works, including "Natural Endowment for the Arts" (New York première). (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Jan. 5.)

NIGHT LIFE

In the past when we dipped into Matthew Sweet's records, we didn't hear what everybody else seemed to be hearing, though we were assured that that was our problem, not his. Sweet's latest outing, "Girlfriend," marks the beginning of our discipleship. We confess to liking almost everything about the Nebraska-born singer-guitarist's new record: the harmonies that light up his simple, sturdy pop songs; the taut, angular guitar playing contributed by Richard Lloyd, of Television, and Richard Quine; and nearly all the songs, such as the loose, rolling "Evangeline," which concerns the comic-book character of the same name, and the countrified "Winona," which vaguely concerns the movie star of the same name. (If the latter song seems like a somewhat cheesy proposition, at least it wasn't called "Winona and Johnny.")

In concert, Sweet covers numbers by Graham Parsons and Neil Young, and Richard Lloyd pitches in with some pretty disquieting guitar work. On December 11, Sweet will be performing at Maxwell's, where he'll share a bill with the Illinois-based outfit Uncle Tupelo. Last year, Uncle Tupelo released a head-turning début album featuring ragged, country-tinged alternative rock, and they've just followed it up with "Still Feel Gone."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The singer and actress **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. The program, titled "Home for the Holidays," marks the singer's fifth anniversary at the Algonquin, and has been described as "a love letter to New York City." Saturday nights at eleven-thirty, Ms. Marcovicci is offering a set titled "I'll Be Seeing You: The Love Songs of World War II." Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. The **WISEGUYS** are here as of Dec. 10. The trio has caught the eye of many cabaret notables around town. Some of their material is a cappella, some includes piano accompaniment; they write many of their own songs (one they wrote is the irreverent "Just Too White"); and between-song patter plays a significant role. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. **GEOFF KEEZER'S** trio holds forth on Dec. 12, and **MARK MORGANELLI'S** group, with **DONALD HARRISON** and **VIC JURIS,** claims Dec. 13-14. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. Vibist **MILT JACKSON'S** quartet can be found here Dec. 10-15, along with the **MARK WHITFIELD** trio. The R. & B. singer and Broadway denizen **RUTH BROWN** begins a run on Dec. 17. First set at nine. Dining.

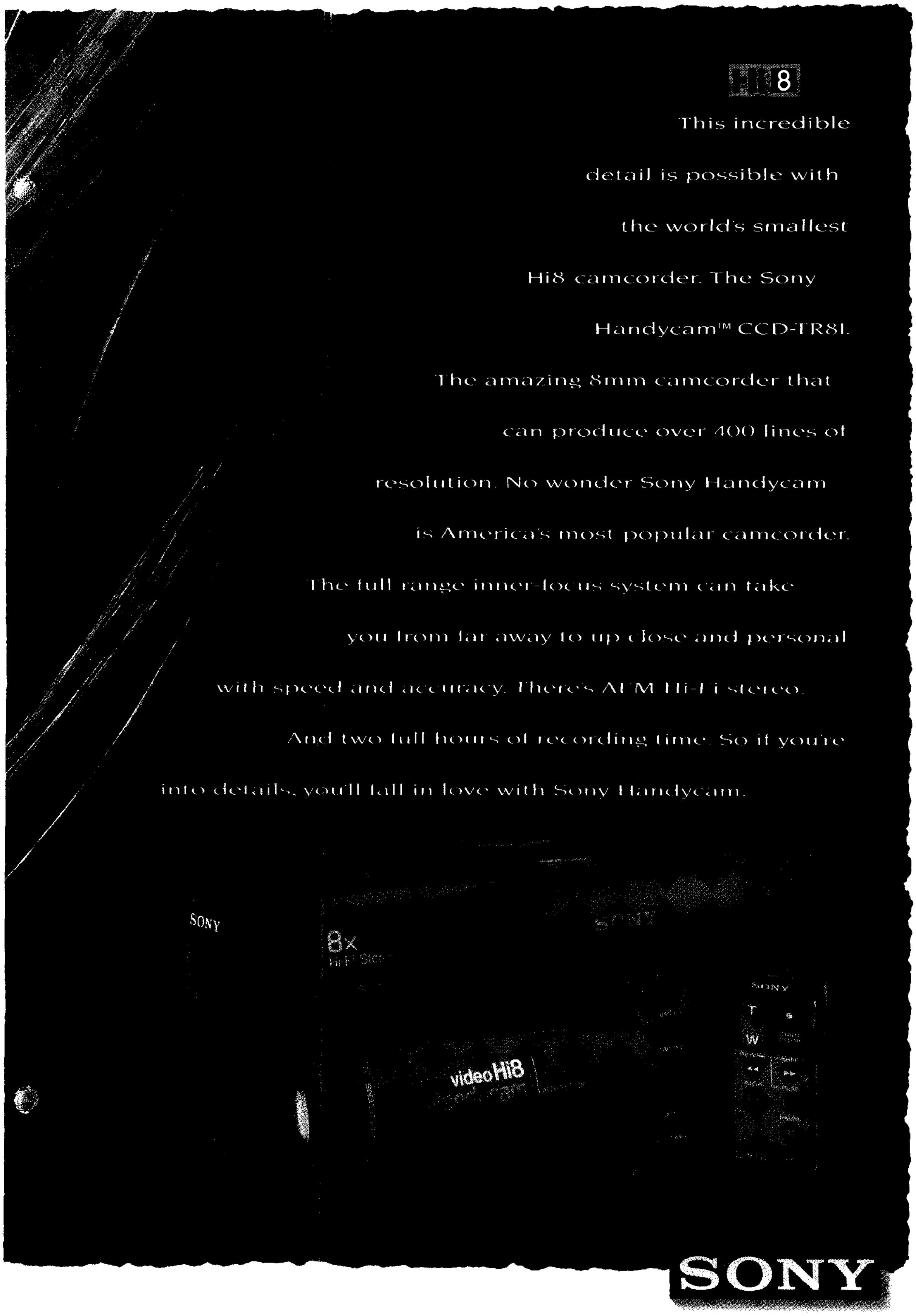
Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. If you end up without a seat, you can stand at the bar—finally a club where they don't force you to drink—and mull over photographs from great shows you've missed. The one-man band known as **TAJ MAHAL** is in evidence on Dec. 12. He has a rich, scratchy voice, plays everything from romping barrelhouse piano to lulling finger-picking guitar, and is given to wearing panama hats. Traditional country blues are his strongest suit, and he delivers them with such clarity and ease that, listening to him, you feel as if you were sitting on a backwoods porch. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and **BOBBY SHORT,** a.k.a. His Shortness, who is somewhere in the middle of his third decade as a guest here. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.... ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Bell-bottoms and peace signs aren't the only nostalgia craze in town: at the Cat Club on Sunday nights, the nineteen-thirties are in vogue. On other nights of the week, the club attracts a scruffy leather-and-lace crowd, but Sundays belong to the Swing Dance Society, whose passion is the Lindy Hop, a dance named after Charles Lindbergh. The dancers are young and old, graceful and flatfooted; the drink of choice is the Swing Dance Punch; the staff looks alternately bemused and bewildered by the genteel crowd. **BOB JANUARY & THE SATIN SWING ORCHESTRA** entertain on Dec. 15. Music from eight to midnight.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave (graffitied walls, a battered pool table, rest rooms for the intrepid only) was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene—Blondie, Talking Heads, the Ramones, and Television were regular attractions. Other clubs of the era have fizzled, but CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. The fine alternative outfit **UNCLE TUPELO** will be here on Dec. 13. Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—Jazz clubs aren't always known for their romantic atmosphere, but Condon's earns higher marks than most. It's a low-ceilinged basement establishment, with lemon walls and abun-



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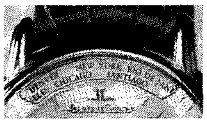

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dant candlelight. They rearranged the furniture here a while back, so that now a greater number of people look at the stage rather than at a pole. **HARRY (SWEETS) EDISON** leads an all-star quintet Dec. 10-15. Music begins after nine-thirty.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker's is an airy, good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. Pianist **BILL MAYS** is here Dec. 11-12, and is joined by bassist **STEVE LA SPINA** Dec. 13-14. Music from nine-forty-five.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **VERNON REID,** the guitarist for Living Colour, joins forces with **WILL CALHOUN** and **MELVIN GIBBS** Dec. 13-14. Music after nine.

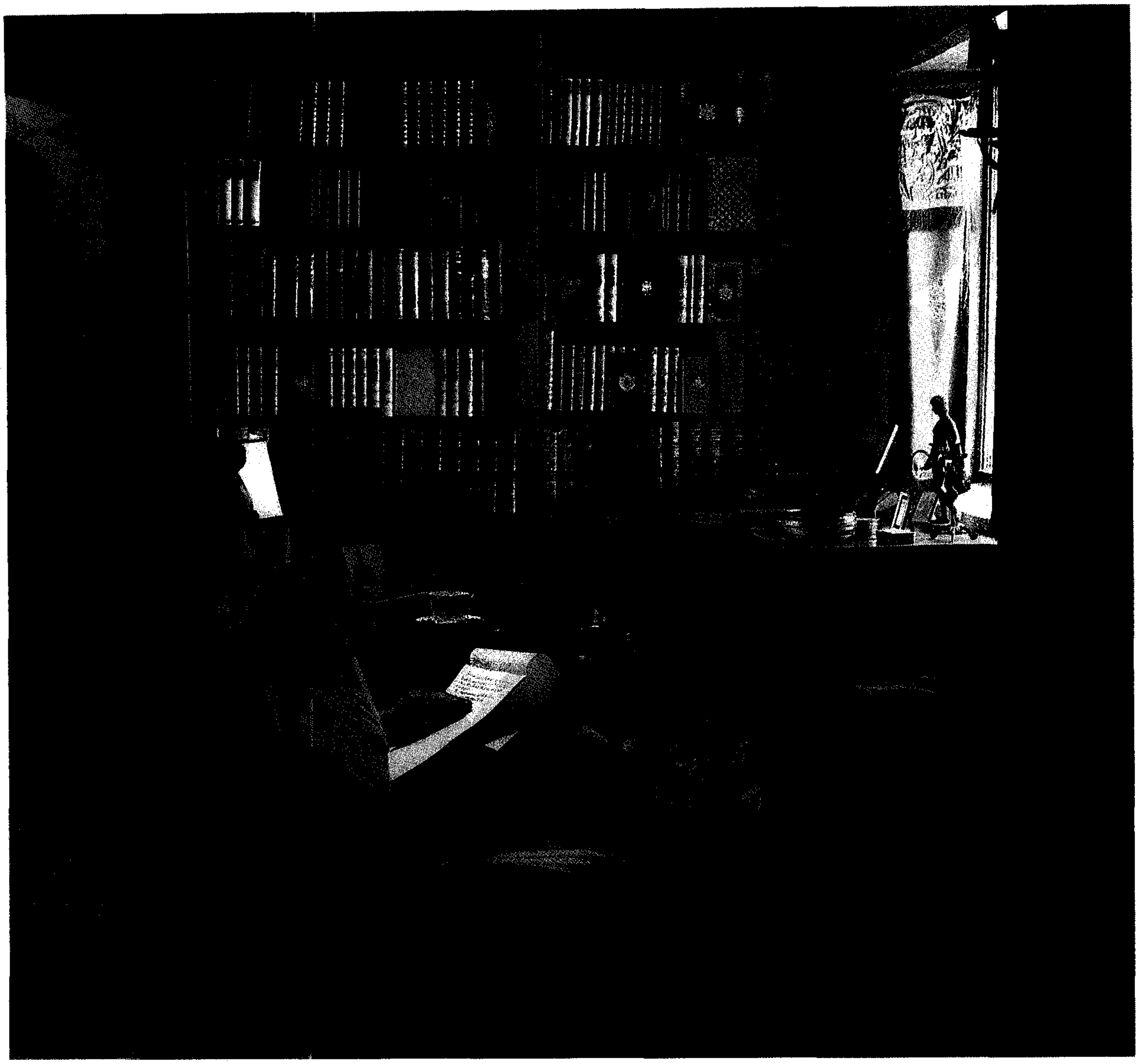
LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but perhaps a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. But the club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too. The gravel-voiced singer-pianist **DR. JOHN** is associated with a warmer climate than New York's, but he's been a pretty regular fixture in these parts lately. He'll be here on Dec. 14. Music after nine. Dining.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars, and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of post-collegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drink concoctions lend the place a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. **JOAN OSBORNE,** who performs here on Dec. 18, sings a bright, pop-inflected variety of blues. She has a wonderfully raspy voice, over which she exerts an extraordinary amount of control, and she is usually seen slinking about the stage, lolling her head dreamily, shaking her kinky red hair, and letting out growling variations on the "aaaah yeah alllll right" theme. Sets from nine-fifteen except on Sundays, when shows begin at eight-forty-five.

MARQUEE, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—The current front-runner on the alternative-music scene. The **OCEAN BLUE** will be here on Dec. 12; **PIGFACE** comes in on Dec. 13; and **WARREN ZEVON,** who's best known for the songs "Werewolves of London" and "Lawyers, Guns, and Money" and who recently released a record called "Mr. Bad Example," appears on Dec. 17-18.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—A back room whose far wall is decorated with round things: a Frisbee, some singles, a drum head, and the woofer from a speaker cabinet, to name a few. The crowd may make you feel as if you have a mid-term to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **IAN MC CULLOCH,** who'll be here on Dec. 10, playing an acoustic set, split from his longtime group Echo and the Bunnymen a while ago to launch a solo career. The Bunnymen have bravely carried on, but without McCulloch their fur has lost its sheen. McCulloch has fared better: he continues to produce grand, romantic pop songs with the biggest hooks in town. **MATTHEW SWEET'S SUPERDEFORMED,** featuring Television guitarist **RICHARD LLOYD,** appears on Dec. 11, with Uncle Tupelo also on the bill. Dec. 14 belongs to singer-guitarist-songwriter **CHRIS STAMEY.** Shows at ten on Thursdays, and at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. **ANITA O'DAY** is currently in residence. Ms. O'Day, an as-



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sured jazz vocalist, scat artist, and comedienne, rose to fame in the forties with Gene Krupa's big band. After Krupa, she drifted out of the jazz world for a long time, and she made a critically acclaimed comeback a couple of years ago. The last time we saw her, she concentrated on forties big-band material, and her voice sounded as supple as ever. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Woody Allen plays with the New Orleans Funeral and Ragtime Orchestra on Mondays. Closed Sundays.

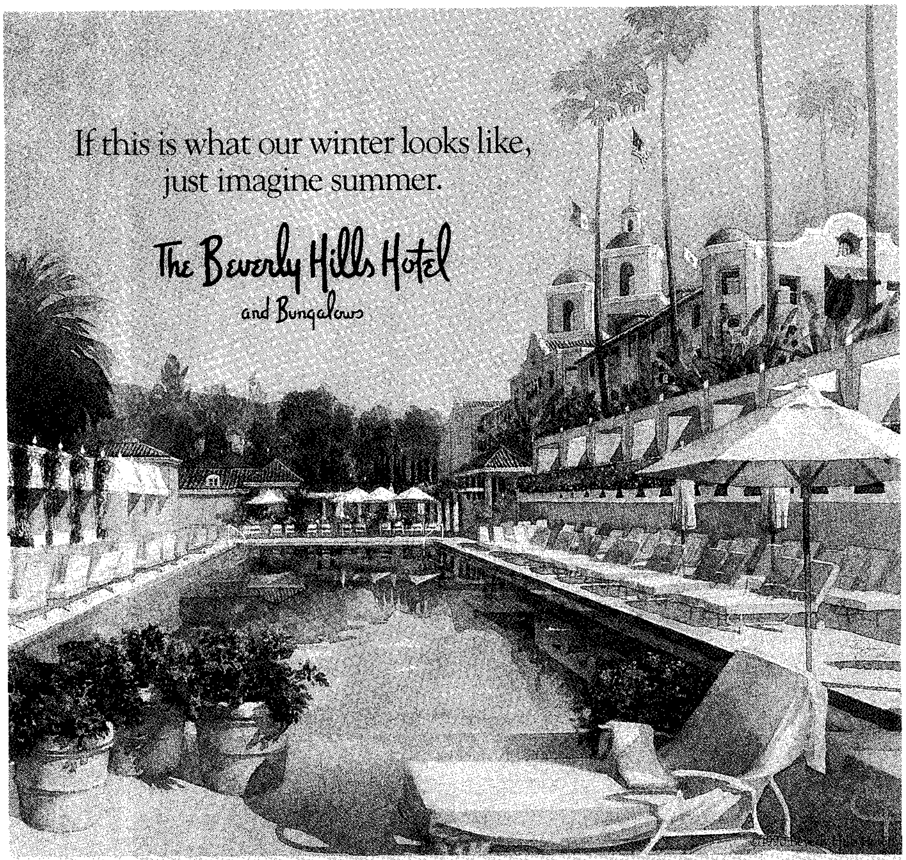
Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expensive

PASTIMES PAST

Before there was Pictionary, before there was Trivial Pursuit, even before there was Monopoly, there was the Majestic Game of the Asiatic Ostrich, an English table game from 1850 in which the fantastic fowl shares its board with British clerics, officers, and noblemen. It's one of the few foreign interlopers among nearly two hundred nineteenth-century American board and table games on display, through January 25, at Columbia University's Wallach Art Gallery (enter at Broadway and 116th Street). The games' bright, chromolithographed images suggest that, even in their leisure hours, our Victorian ancestors used their time profitably.

Some of the games stress physical coördination, including the still familiar Tiddledy Winks and Pillow-Dex (Parker Brothers' 1896 forerunner to Ping-Pong, in which a balloon is batted over a tabletop net). Many others are didactic, such as the 1895 Game of Napoleon, in which players gain or lose points depending on where they land among dozens of laurel-rimmed circles ("1804 Coronation, Take 5"; "1812 Burning of Moscow, Lose 2"; "June 18th 1815, Waterloo, Lose 10").

Victorian morality loomed large in the age that spawned both Horatio Alger's novels and the spin-the-dial Telegraph Boy, in which the player accumulates points (read "wealth") and advances to the corporate presidency by landing on such spaces as "promptness," "affability," "integrity," and "accuracy"—but only if he avoids the pitfalls of "laziness," "untidiness," "stupidty" [sic], and "theft." Since dice were frowned on as suggestive of gambling, players of board games often moved their pieces according to the spinning of a dreidel-like teetotum inscribed with numbers. A contestant would have used one of these to progress across the red-and-beige checkerboard aptly titled the Checkered Game of Life, a wildly successful Milton Bradley offering of the eighteen-sixties, in which moral idealism rubs shoulders with reality. Landing on the square labelled "idleness" sends the player's piece to "disgrace"; "crime" leads to "prison" and "gambling" to "ruin"; but "wealth" can be attained by way of either "industry" or "government contract."



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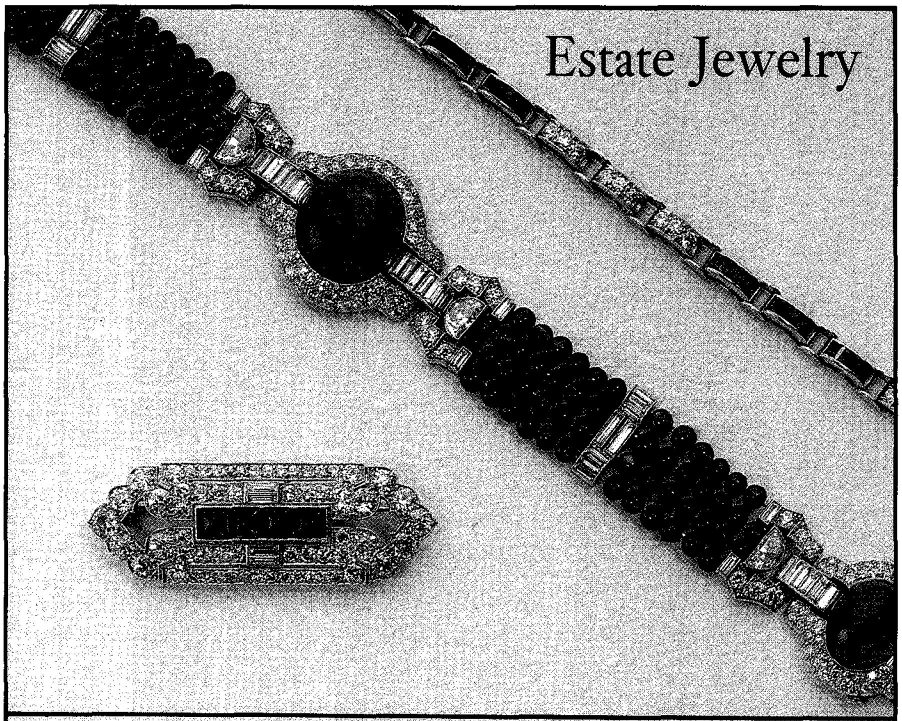

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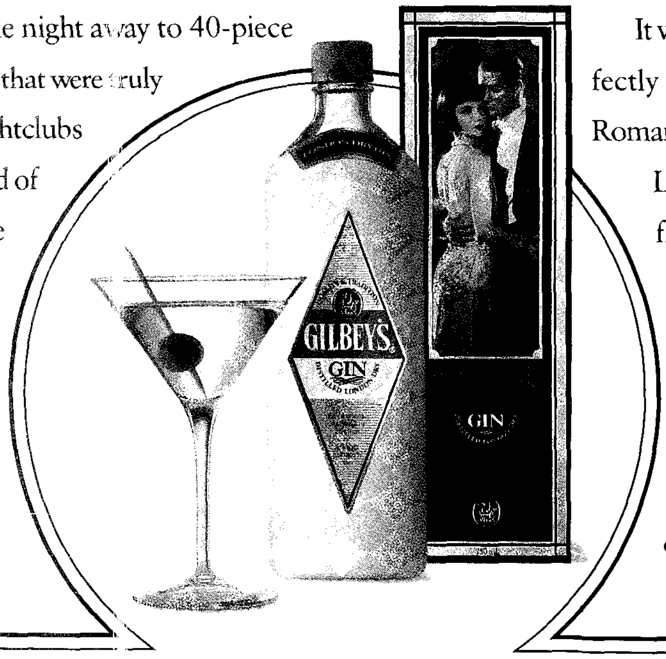

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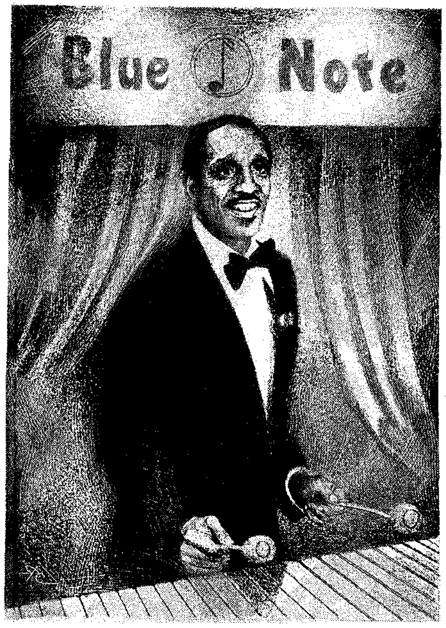

Milt Jackson at the Blue Note

Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, have to compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. **LORNA LUFT,** who comes from what can safely be called a musical family and whose shows are a mix of pop songs, standards, and reminiscences is holding forth here for the next few weeks. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This decaying theatre was once the famous Studio 54, where the late Steve Rubell's employees helped popularize the policy of turning away the unbeautiful. Now it's the home of one of the city's biggest, oldest, and loudest rock clubs, which was formerly housed in a decaying ballroom in the East Village. **PAUL WELLER,** who'll be here on Dec. 12, has had a career that's been as odd as it's been illustrious. In the heyday of punk, he was the leader of the Jam, the greatest mod band since the Who; when they disbanded, he founded the Style Council, a suave, elegant, but uneven pop-jazz-soul combo. Lately, Weller has more or less dropped out of sight, and rumor has it that he'll be digging into his back catalogue for his show here. Show times vary.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" Closed Sundays. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." The legendary guitarist **BARNEY KESSEL** performs with a trio Dec. 10-15; **GERI ALLEN, DAVID MURRAY, RICHARD DAVIS,** and **ANDREW CYRILLE** begin work on Dec. 17. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. **KING MISSILE** will be here on Dec. 12. The band, which has had unlikely college-radio hits like "Jesus Was Way Cool," recently released their first major-label album, a bizarre and hilarious outing titled "The Way to Salvation." King Missile is fronted by John S. Hall, a performance-artist type whose vocals are, for the most part, nasty, political monologues with titles like "To Walk Among the Pigs." Shows from ten.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

ALL hail. The Caesar haircut is dead. Just this summer, virtually every male encircling the cornsilken damsels at Rex (579 Sixth Avenue, at 16th Street) appeared to have come from a hard day's work throwing Christians to the lions. Yet by Thanksgiving eve the pompadours there were piled higher than the Stove Top stuffing displays at Waldbaum's. Even in a club whose Con Ed bill must be lower than yours, one could spot the glints of newly grown forelocks being smoothed back by a clientele so sculpted and comely that there's reason to suspect the existence of an underground tunnel between Rex and Live Bait.

Unfortunately, the hosts of the night's *Manipulator* party, celebrating the international magazine that's so large that mailmen quake when confronted with a stack of them, were not impressed with this crowd's fashion forwardness. It's not just that the stylish mag and its devotees had already dispensed with the look by Groundhog Day and were now grazing along edgier pastures. The problem was more practical than aesthetic, as was emphasized by one of the publishers, who walked into this dark, shadowed space and, after doing a 360 to peruse those dancing in the dark, cried out, "Who invited these people? I feel like I threw a wedding for someone else's child. One I don't like." Hoping to placate him, we asked half a dozen of the regulars (or "party uslurpers," as one true invitee labelled them) if they knew what *Manipulator* was. Their guesses? A video game. That late-night series on CBS. One of those at-home exercise things. How could we tell our hosts this? It was too *et tu, Brute* for us. We didn't have the heart. We didn't have the guts. We didn't have the hair.

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BIG APPLE CIRCUS—Performances under the little big top run through Jan. 5, in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park. For ticket and schedule information, call 874-8990.

"THE CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR"—Radio City Music Hall's annual Yuletide dancearama—with the Rockettes, of course—runs though Jan. 7. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

"NOSFERATU: A SYMPHONY OF DARKNESS"—Stills from the classic film will be projected onto a screen and accompanied by music, dance, and lighting effects. Created by Ping Chong. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Dec. 12-15 and Dec. 18 at 7:30. Through Dec. 22.)

"BASEMENT"—A solo performance piece by Denise Stoklos. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Dec. 12-15 at 8.)

BREAD AND PUPPET THEATRE—Presenting "Nativity," a rendition, with puppets, of you know what. In this version, however, Mary and Joseph have a holstein calf, so watch out. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Dec. 12-13 and Dec. 15 at 8, and Dec. 14 at 3 and 8.)

"SPEAKING IN TONGUES: STORYTELLING BY MENFOLKS"—Stories, songs, and music by Joe Bruchac, Ron Daise, YaYa Diallo, Fred Ho, Charles Hyatt, Jay O'Callahan, and Enrique Vargas. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7100. Dec. 15 at 3.)

"THE WATCHTOWER"—An opera-oratorio by Andy Kirshner, which is based on television news. With a chamber orchestra, vocal soloists, and a small chorus. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Dec. 17-18 at 8. Through Dec. 22.)

PUBLIC THEATRE—Presenting "Moving Beyond the Madness: A Festival of New Voices." Dec. 10 and Dec. 12 at 8: Han Ong and Anna Deveare Smith. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 8: Derin Young and Danitra Vance. . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 8: Derin Young and Pomo Afro Homos. . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 8: Pomo Afro Homos. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 10: Danitra Vance. . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 8: Blondell Cummings. (425 Lafayette St. 598-7105.)

P.S. 122—Dec. 12-15 at 8: Judith Jackson and the Thunderthigh Revue in a new performance piece. Through Dec. 22. . . . ¶ Dec. 12-15 at 9: Dances by Donna Uchizono. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ART

GEORGE MOORE is no Cézanne. Neither is he the George Moore—also a painter—of Manet's well-known portraits, nor the Bloomsbury philosopher and friend of Roger Fry. Yet there *is* something Cézannesque about his work, and there's a bit of the painter of modern life in his point of view. Moore's ten landscapes at the Plumb gallery (81 Greene Street; through December 21), each of them six feet square, are composed of the kinds of linear segments and patches of color—brownish earth tones and piney greens—that may forever signify Mont Sainte-Victoire. But rather than evoking Cubism, these paintings suggest a sort of cubistic inverse. They are imaginary aerial views of various terrains, and the artist has accepted the two-dimensionality of that ultimate abstract painting—by turns geometric and biomorphic, hard-edge and soft-focus, pastoral and post-industrial—which we all see while travelling in the sky, and he has extracted from it values that are multidimensional.

To say that Moore has not quite managed to shoot himself in the foot with the deadly pistol of good intentions is perhaps the strongest tribute we can give to his work. In the manner of countless recent mixed-media installations, these self-explanatory and conventionally displayed works come with an explanation. A drawing near the front desk serves as a "blueprint" of the global economy and, thus, as a "key" to the paintings. It's an irritating touch. The artist lived in El Salvador and Nicaragua between 1984 and 1986, which is no small matter in anyone's C.V. A five-day tourist jaunt almost anywhere in Central America is enough to seduce and radicalize a rock. Yet Moore's "credentials" are made so much of that you may think of doctors with more framed diplomas than you can possibly trust. Occasionally, Moore's zeal gets the better of his brush technique, which borders on Pointillism to begin with—and that technique can get mechanical and repetitive. But most of these paintings are mysterious, handsome, and thematically compelling. In one of the best, "El Salvador," dark green predominates and the patchwork grid has relaxed. We are looking down at jungle, and at the inchoate, half-camouflaged figure of a classic pre-Columbian artifact. Seeing it, one is reminded of all those generations of art students looking for "the face of God" in the trees and clouds of Cézanne's "Big Bathers."

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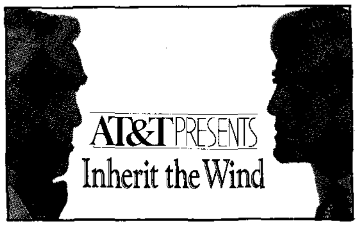
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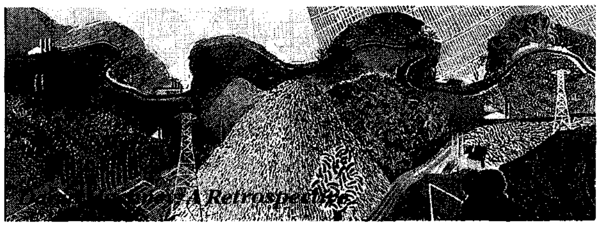
A Retrospective

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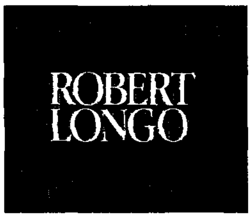
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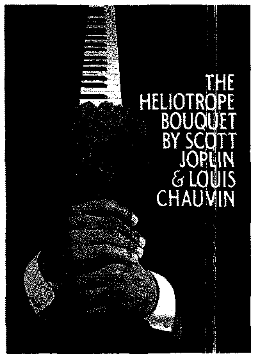
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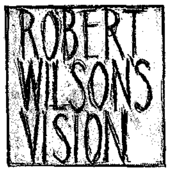
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A retrospective of the works of Stuart Davis (1892-1964), including a hundred and seventy-five paintings, murals, watercolors, and drawings. Through Feb. 16. . . . ¶ "Seurat." A crisply efficient and compartmentalized exhibition of paintings by the short-lived Neo-Impressionist, on the centenary of his death. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ "Neo-Impressionism: The Friends and Followers of Georges Seurat," best taken as a kind of appetizer before the main course, consists of eighty-eight paintings, drawings, and watercolors, by Paul Signac, Camille Pissarro, Henri Matisse, and many others. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ The redesigned and renovated Arms and Armor galleries are open, and jammed to the hilt. The central Equestrian Court is still here, regally appointed, and it is now surrounded by eight new displays of Japanese, European, Islamic, and American weaponry and armor. . . . ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." The Eilenberg collection, from which this show has been selected, is not particularly comprehensive nor focussed on grand masterpieces, but it does sparkle in many unexpected ways. From India come plenty of treasures, such as a prancing mythical "leogryph"; from a southern province of Thailand comes an early and glorious carving of Avalokiteshvara; and from Indonesia comes a group of bronze sculptures that many consider to be the finest privately assembled collection of such material in the world. . . . ¶ "Resplendence of the Spanish Monarchy." This breathtaking exhibition of sixteenth-century works centers on eleven very large tapestries of beautifully intricate detail, made by the most respected Flemish craftsmen, and on some of the finest armor ever forged, from Augsburg, in present-day Germany. Through Jan. 5. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's Christmas tree and eighteenth-century crèche can be seen through Jan. 12. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"*Dislocations*" is an exhibition of seven commissioned installations, by Louise Bourgeois, Chris Burden, Sophie Calle, David Hammons, Ilya Kabakov, Bruce Nauman, and Adrian Piper. The show is a collective reproof of racial, sexual, and class stereotypes, as well as of nationalism, governments, bureaucracies, and war. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Word 2 My Mother," a video installation by Tony Cokes. Through Jan. 19. . . . ¶ "Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort" explores the contemporary photographer's preoccupation with the life of the home, in more than a hundred and fifty works. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ An exhibition of drawings, photographs, scale models, and a video related to projects by Tadao Ando, one of Japan's leading architects. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ The annual "New Photography" series presents recent work by Eberhard Grames, Sheron Rupp, and Stephen A. Scheer. Through Jan. 7. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until May, 1992.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Seventy multimedia works, from 1971 to the present, by Alexis Smith. . . . ¶ "Variations on Themes," a show of serial works in various graphic mediums, by, among others, Terry Winters, Dennis Adams, Kiki Smith, and Jasper Johns. Starts Dec. 13. . . . ¶ Fifty mobiles, stabiles, works on paper, tapestries, and other objects by Alexander Calder (1898-1976). . . . ¶ "American Life in American Art." Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." Starts Dec. 11. . . . ¶ A mid-career retrospective of the works of Sigmar Polke. Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "Objects of Myth and Memory." A fascinating exhibition of two hundred and fifty of the museum's nine thousand Native American objects. The most engaging items are not the treasures, of which there are a number, but the objects of daily life: games, clothes, pots, baskets, belt buckles, rattles, and hats. Through Dec. 29. . . . ¶ A companion show of contemporary Native American works, including ceramics, elk-horn carvings, and Pomo baskets. Through Jan. 27. . . . ¶ A thirty-foot-long platform of forged-iron sculptures is the fifteenth installment in Alain Kirili's "Commandment" series. Through Jan. 5. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

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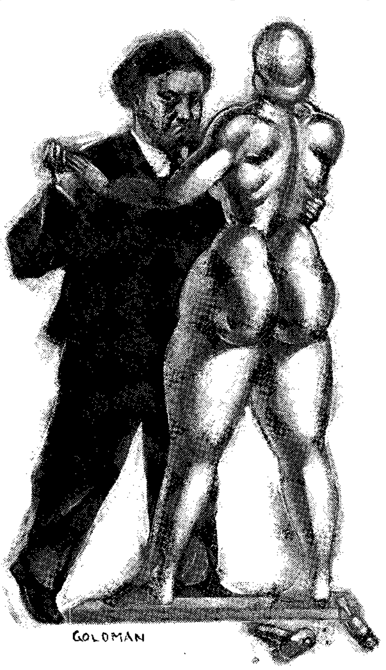

Gaston Lachaise: one of "Six American Modernists," at Hirschl & Adler

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch" presents elaborately decorated plates and bowls, masks, and other objects used in the British Columbian tribe's lavish rituals of hospitality and wealth. Through Feb. 23. . . . **NOTE:** The annual holiday origami tree can be seen through Jan. 5. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Frank Lloyd Wright: Preserving an Architectural Heritage" is a show of more than seventy pieces of furniture, art-glass windows, lights, and other decorative objects spanning sixty years of the architect's career. Through Jan. 19. . . . ¶ Two site-specific installations, one by Sam Gilliam, the other by Robert Kushner. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints." By means of informative wall labels, this exhibition articulately decodes erotic ukiyo-e prints of the Tokugawa period (1615-1868) in several categories: "dangerous pictures," "heroes in disguise," "secret messages," and "forbidden news." The show is an intelligent and impassioned response to recent attempts to legislate "appropriate" subject matter for art. Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "Motifs and Meanings in Asian Art," a selection of sixty Korean, Chinese, and Japanese works from the Rockefeller collection. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—The six large paintings that are the centerpiece of Brice Marden's show of works inspired by the Tang-dynasty poet Cold Mountain are truly sophisticated: delicate yet grand in scale and unerringly structured by an almost impromptu line. The works on paper are, in contrast, awkward and pale, especially when compared with the Chinese calligraphy that they seem to mimic, halfheartedly. . . . ¶ For those unfamiliar with the Conceptual and graphic work of Lawrence Weiner, this exhibition, titled "Displacement," is a good primer. While the artist is known for creating exquisite artistic moments in the sparest situations, the current show is sort of the inverse. The wittiest piece, expressing a double-edged ambivalence, is on the Center's bathroom doors, which are labelled "Us" and "Them." . . . ¶ On the roof, which offers a view of the Hudson River, Dan Graham has created a fine urban park with glass walls, a floor of spongy asphalt tiles, and a squat glass cylinder at its center. The park is elevated above the roof as if it were afloat, and it is very pleasant to spend time up there, especially in the nearby coffee bar/video lounge. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Fraunces Tavern Museum, 54 Pearl St.—"Come All You Gallant Heroes" chronicles—through objects and first-hand accounts—the life of the Continental Army and state militia soldier during the Revolutionary War. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 4.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—Twenty-eight paintings and fourteen drawings by the French rococo master Nicolas Lancret (1690-1743). Through Jan. 12. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"From Expressionism to Resistance: Art in Germany, 1909-36" is a selection of a hundred and ninety paintings, sculptures, and works on paper from the Marvin and Janet Fishman collection. Artists on view include George Grosz, Erich Heckel, Conrad Felixmüller, and Otto Dix. Through Jan. 26. . . . ¶ "The Sigmund Freud Antiquities: Fragments from a Buried Past" displays eighty-six objects from the psychoanalyst's personal collection, including Egyptian, Greek, Near Eastern, and Asian works. Another twenty works from London's Freud Museum and the Library of Congress supplement the exhibition, which was inspired by Edmund Engelman's 1938 photographs of Freud's Vienna study. Eight of those works are also on view. Through Feb. 18. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—The permanent collection has been given three new gallery spaces and is shown off in "Masterpieces of the Morgan Library." Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Swiss Folk Art" consists of nearly two hundred works, including utilitarian and decorative objects, religious and ceremonial works, and American pieces inspired by Swiss design. Through Jan. 1. (Open daily, 11:30 to 7:30.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Hallowed Haunts," a show of seventy-three drawings and watercolors by Charles Addams (1912-88), most of which first appeared in these pages. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ An exhibition of paintings, drawings, manuscripts, and published works by Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872), the Academy's founder. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Imagining the New World" is a shipload of paintings, drawings, maps, astrolabes, and other Columbian iconography drawn from museums and libraries in Italy, France, and Germany. Through Jan. 26. . . . ¶ "While They Fought: The Homefront in New York City" includes many posters, photographs (one shows Kate Smith surrounded by sailors), and artifacts from the Second World War. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—A large selection of manuscripts, letters, photographs, and other objects that shed light on the life of Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950). (Berg Collection. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.). . . ¶ Merlin, Mordred, Gawain, and Galahad leap off the pages and prints of "King Arthur: Looking at the Legend." Through Feb. 22. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ A hundred and fifty German Expressionist prints and books—mostly from the period 1910-30—by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Käthe Kollwitz, Wassily Kandinsky, George Grosz, and others. Through Jan. 4. (Third Floor Gallery. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART, Flushing Meadow Park—"Closet No. 9," by Kenny Scharf, is one of the artist's surreal Day-Glo environments, incorporating paintings, customized appliances, and industrial materials. Through Dec. 20. . . . ¶ Seventeen drawings and sculptures by Mel Chin. Through Feb. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

JÖRG IMMENDORFF—Paintings from 1965 and 1966, when the artist was a student of Joseph Beuys' at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art, and works in various mediums made between 1967 and 1970, under the LIDL rubric: a Dadaist parallel universe involving urban design (for instance, streets laid out according to the wanderings of turtles), baby-power symbols, and props relating to anti-authoritarian political actions of great humor and flamboyance. This show is extremely interesting and charming, and is a must for anyone interested in Beuys, early-eighties German painting, Western Europe's 1968 cult, Godardian Maoism, agitprop, etc. Through Dec. 21. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

PHILIP TAAFFE—Mostly large, abstract paintings that are sumptuously ornamental while being both technically and intellectually rigorous. Though they register effortlessly upon the mind and the eye, they are in fact as complex as the ancient Byzantine-Levantine cultures that have provided the artist with many of his motifs. Taaffe's colors, opulent and sometimes weathered yet without the facile decorator's touch of so much recent antiquing in art, may make you yearn for travel and adventure, poetry and pleasure. Through Jan. 11. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

"SIX AMERICAN MODERNISTS"—A generous selection of paintings, sculptures, and drawings, by Marsden Hartley, Gaston Lachaise, Elie Nadelman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Charles Sheeler, and John Storrs. Through Jan. 4. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

SHORT LIST—**STUART DAVIS** and **GRAHAM NICKSON**, Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 21); **JOELLYN DUESBERRY**, Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through Dec. 14); **HERBERT FERBER**, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Jan. 2); **MARINO MARINI**, Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through Dec. 20); **BOB THOMPSON**, Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. (through Dec. 14).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

ARMAN—Sculptural groupings of ordinary objects cast in bronze to look as if they were barnacle-encrusted and had just been raised from the ocean floor. The masses of shoes, hammers, sewing machines, and telephones are attractive enough, if ordinary, but there are two works that deserve particular mention. One consists of two chair frames collapsed in an exhausted heap, and the other of two especially fragile bicycles collapsed together. Through Dec. 21. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

DONALD BAECHLER—Paintings from 1981 and 1982. Baechler's earlier works, such as "Bay of Naples," with its sweetly hapless image of a pizza baker, are looking very classic these days, as well bred, in their quiet yet subversive way, as early works by Lichtenstein and Johns. This small, elegant show includes several white-on-white paintings, and one whose blotted image of a Miami Beach hotel hovers over a mottled, sandy ground. Through Dec. 21. (Baron-Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St.)

JOAN NELSON—New paintings; no news. Tiny landscapes. Antique looking. Very pretty. The nicest of all are almost empty: just sky, for instance, and a shrub or the top of a branch. Through Jan. 4. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

DANIEL SPOERRI—This *nouveau réaliste* caused a Fluxian sensation in the early sixties, when he affixed table scraps and other debris from various meals to upside-down tables, hung the resulting tableaux on the wall, and called it art. Having explored the issue of food, Spoerri has now gone on to two other major themes—sex and death—with very funny figurative assemblages made up of kitschy German landscape paintings, animal heads, battered but gracefully posed mannequins, various scythelike farm implements, and occasional shells and animal horns set bawdily in all the wrong places. Through Dec. 31. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"WISDOM AND COMPASSION: THE SACRED ART OF TIBET"—This excellent exhibition consists almost exclusively of tankas and sculptures drawn from some of the best private and public collections of such material. The earliest sculpture on view, dating from the late eleventh or early twelfth century, is an exquisite portrayal of Shakyamuni, the Buddha at the moment before enlightenment. He touches the earth with a look of utter contentment. Formally, it is a marvellous study in gently undulating lines. Another sculpture, from the same period, of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion (from the Ellsworth collection), is more raw, an early manifestation of the voluptuousness of form that burst forth centuries later. The Tibetans were masters at creating a sense of great animation through the merest hand gesture—this is especially evident in the earlier works. Later, with the introduction of the many-armed deities, the objects become theatre pieces, sometimes grotesquely overrendered, at other times hypnotically epic. Through Dec. 28. (I.B.M. Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St.)

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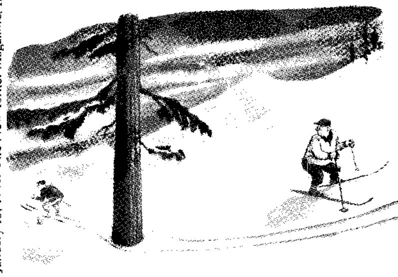

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ART—Cont'd

Short List—**William Beckman,** Stiebel, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 11); **Jake Berthot,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Dec. 24); **Claudio Bravo,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Jan. 4); **William Dunlap,** French, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Jan. 4); **Duncan Hannah,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 28); **Edward Koren** (through Dec. 21) and **Elisabeth Frink** (through Dec. 16), Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.; **Robert M. Kulicke,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through Dec. 21); **Agnes Martin,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 4); **Ana Mendieta,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 11); **Beverly Pepper** (through Jan. 4) and **Stanley Boxer** (through Dec. 14), Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.; **Pavel Tchelitchew,** Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 14); **Bill Traylor,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 11).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Georg Baselitz—A re-creation of the artist's installation at "Zeitgeist," a 1982 exhibition in Berlin that formalized the new international order in contemporary art. These are some of the artist's most heated Expressionist paintings—inverted shouting men who are the defiant reverse of the silent scream. The paintings are installed very high on the wall, as they originally were, so that they intimidate the viewer. Perhaps in 1982, after several decades of American hegemony in the art world, such a move could have been interpreted as a necessary stance for just recognition, but today it merely detracts from one's ability to see the works for what they are—paintings. Through Dec. 21. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Hans Coper (1920-81) / **Dan Flavin**—Beautiful, sophisticated ceramic vessels that are strong in form and delicate in execution. They suggest everything from Cycladic statuary to modern sculpture. / Three dramatic new fluorescent and ultraviolet light sculptures that combine Albers-like austerity with baroque excess. Through Dec. 20. (RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway.)

Gloria Friedmann—Very well-crafted and not especially interesting minimalistic objects made primarily of natural materials. The works include, for example, a section of a weathered tree stump and a topiary cone of dried grass. A huge convex disk of grain is particularly attractive. Through Dec. 21. (Marcus, 568 Broadway.)

Michael Jenkins—The artist presents a "sissy's" world, without apology, in large, adamantly yellow sculptures with boyhood references—camp showers, and the like. A blackboard-size abacus with large yellow balls is quite resonant, although the artist's sentiments seem better expressed in his drawings, which are more metaphoric. Through Dec. 21. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

Jeff Koons—This overanticipated instant scapegoat of a show is actually very useful, as it clearly illuminates Koons' strengths and limitations—what he can and can't pull off, what he does and doesn't seem to grasp about material presence and the visual dynamics of art. He doesn't, for instance, seem to understand anything at all about what makes a painting work. The dozen or so large, photo-and-performance-based paintings in which we find this sometime ceramist and his picaresque wife, the porcelain-skinned Cicciolina, in flagrante, may be brave or perhaps foolhardy gestures, and worthy of some respect for that, but they are total duds as two-dimensional constructs. Intended—quite sincerely, we believe—as a paean to conjugal love between two self-styled legends of the meta-culture, these works are strangely immaterial. Low-tension, low-contrast, at once hard-core and high-flown, they are too dramatically cloying as porn and too vacuously naïve as art. Furthermore, though the various *amatorio* scenes are set in a series of generically conceived Valhallas and Camelots, the visible production values, Koons' specialty, are here flatly mid-level—neither the Disney- or Fellini-esque extravaganzas one might have expected nor what could have been an interesting shift toward intensively low-rent porn-verité genres. Some of the sculptures in the show, however, are up to snuff. The marble figure, for example, of a white Persian pussycat (in Ileana Sonnabend's office, along with the rear-entry-sex painting) falls into this category, as does a quite obscenely beautiful low-lying glass floral centerpiece. Through Dec. 21. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Giulio Paolini—For several decades, this artist has been engaged in a romantic expression of artistic melancholy. Two new large-scale works, several collages, and a series of photographs continue in this vein. Of the larger works, one, hanging on the wall, is an engaging endgame meditation on illusionism and literalism, but the other, which lies in front of it, is the show's charmer: it's a gargantuan canvas stretcher collapsed atop an easel that's far too small to support it, with the canvas draped in a heap over one of its crossbars. Through Dec. 21. (SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St.)

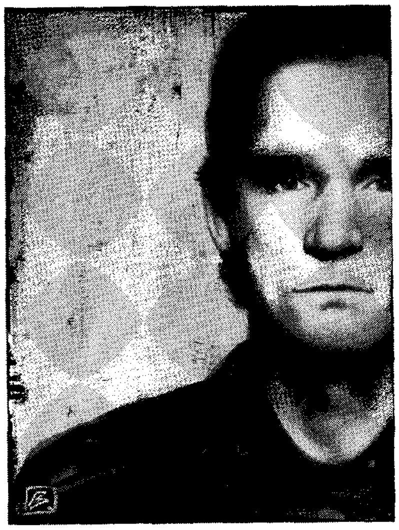
Nicolas Rule—Monochromatic paintings of equine genealogy charts that trail off into perfectly aestheticized drips. Many of the works include the names of racehorses, aptly suggesting a correspondence between art-making, or art collecting, and the breeding of thoroughbreds. The paintings are very attractive, though much too effete. Through Dec. 14. (Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St.)

Julia Scher—This artist's bag is surveillance, and she is the *maîtresse* of the obvious. Scher has placed video cameras in various locations throughout the gallery, including the loo, and has installed a group of monitors on which visitors can view the goings-on, with such ominous phrases as "control paths," "incident desensitizers," and "child-torture patrols" superimposed over them. But a single eight-by-ten of an all-female security force says it all more hauntingly and ironically, and in so much less space. Through Dec. 21. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

Carol Szymanski—An exhibition of new sculptures: musical instruments whose shapes are based on the phonetic alphabet. The big copper floor piece—a group of drums—has a presence that is rakishly primordial. The smaller brass pieces—little trumpets twisted into the letter shapes and installed on wall shelves—seem pinched and cold, as if they would make a pained sound. Szymanski is an interesting young artist who definitely follows the beat of her own private drummer. It would be nice, however, if she would just take those ideas and constructs of hers a bit more for granted and start lavishing more attention on the physical objects themselves. Through Dec. 21. (Lipton, 67 Prince St.)

Betty Woodman—Large, exquisitely crafted clay vessels with fanciful handles. Many are glazed to suggest volume where the form is quite flat, and Woodman does a better job with 2-D/3-D games than most other painters and sculptors who attempt them. There are also a few multipart wall pieces, which are less interesting precisely because they try so hard to be "sculpture," whereas the beauty of Woodman's extraordinarily sophisticated pots is that they make superfluous the division between craft and art. Through Dec. 14. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

"Marking/Time"—An engaging ensemble of artists who approach in very different ways the



Jean-Pierre Raynaud

problem of how to record, on paper, the passage of time. Jacob El Hanani's precise ink drawings encourage a Zenlike submergence, whereas John A. Reilly's dot-pattern drawings defy it. Nancy Rubins' endearingly unruly piles of densely worked graphite drawings pushpinned to the wall and ceiling suggest a truly oddball sense of busywork. Angela Bulloch has constructed a machine that does the busywork for her—and for the viewer—by drawing, in red ink, directly on the wall. The contraption moves slowly up and down, at speeds that viewers can regulate with the use of a pedal and a cushioned chair. The piece is much more about following the journey of the line than about the line itself. By the end of the show it should have created a solid mass of red. Through Dec. 20. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

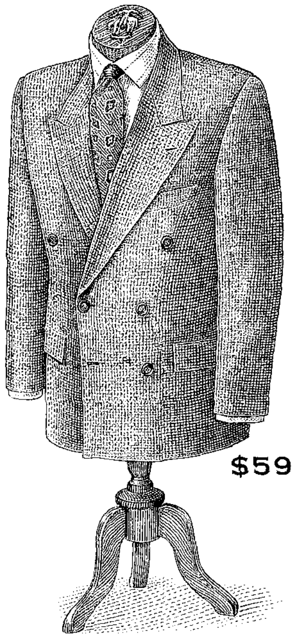
"The Hybrid State"—Since its inception, in 1982, Exit Art has offered a multicultural perspective on art, an approach that has gained more and more currency over the past few seasons. As if to take due credit, Papo Colo, one of the organization's guiding lights, has designed an installation in which he has adapted elements from the works of various artists who have exhibited at Exit Art—Jimmie Durham, David Hammons, Ursula von Rydingsvärd, Martin Wong, and others—and placed them in a sort of dialogue with one another. "The Hybrid State" argues for a kind of post-multicultural collaborative approach in which interracial and intellectual bonds can be forged. The individual vignettes are linked in a way that approximates the interdependencies of a Rube Goldberg contraption, but with a tone that is perhaps closer to the patter of a Borscht Belt comic. Some of the groupings are quite clever, but most lack soul—they're nothing but good-natured caricature of the artists' individual intentions. Through Dec. 14. (578 Broadway.)

"From the Train"—Works (by gallery artists) loosely connected in spirit, if not in image, to the exhibition's title. Kate Ericson and Mel Zeigler are represented by a toy model of a Union Pacific coal train loaded with marble fragments etched with the text of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The work is perhaps a suggestion that the railroad, a symbol to some of American colonization, was built in disregard of the rights "guaranteed" by the Constitution. But the piece is dry and overly didactic. Matt Mullican's large oil-stick rubbing of his drawing of an old Milan railroad yard, on the other hand, is rich in poetic evocation. Its crisscrossing tracks suggest both the workings of the mind and the intricacies of a life. Equally compelling is Jackie Ferrara's small wood sculpture of a walkway—a Hopperesque waiting room infused with a vaporous sense of time. Through Jan. 18. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

Short List—**VINCENZO AGNETTI**, Ala, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 28); **ALAN BELCHER**, Baer, 476 Broome St. (through Dec. 28); **RICHARD BOSMAN**, Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Dec. 18); **DANIEL BUREN**, Weber, 142 Greene St. (through Dec. 21); **DAVID CABRERA** and **LAUREN SZOLD**, 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. (through Dec. 23); **LAUREN EWING**, Brown, 23 Watts St. (through Jan. 8); **ANN HAMILTON**, Louver, 130 Prince St. (through Jan. 4); **JAMES HENNESSEY**, Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 21); **MICHAEL HURSON**, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through Dec. 21); **RONALD JONES**, Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through Dec. 21); **IMI KNOEBEL**, Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through Jan. 11); **ANDREW MASULLO**, Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Dec. 21); **JAMES NARES**, Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through Dec. 21); **DAVID NYZIO**, Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (through Dec. 21); **JEAN-PIERRE RAYNAUD**, Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 14); **PETER SCHMERSAL**, Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through Jan. 18); **BERNAR VENET**, Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Jan. 4); **WILLIAM WEGMAN**, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through Jan. 4).

OTHER GALLERIES

Short List—**MIKE HOWARD**, Baby Doll Lounge, 34 White St. (open Mondays through Saturdays, noon to 4 A.M.; through Jan. 3); **ARTHUR RACKHAM**, Butler Library, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. (open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:45; through Feb. 1[illegible]); **BARBARA WESTMAN**, Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. (through Dec. 31).



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PHOTOGRAPHY

“Elliott Erwitt: On the Beach” (W. W. Norton) is a book we’ve been looking forward to seeing, and now that it’s out we’re not disappointed. Erwitt is such a modest, clever photographer that he can run with a subject in many directions and never end up with pretentious or boring photographs. Even his pictures of things that are usually very dull in photographs have wit, and they almost always display his capacity for sharp observation. His view is ironic, not sarcastic; warm, not snobbish.

What Erwitt shows can also be very revealing about photography itself. He’s especially good at playing with the clichés of the medium. This, for example, is what he has to say about a real classic in beach iconography, the seagull: “For years I’ve been trying to take a really terrific picture of seagulls, but I’ve never succeeded. . . .You can use them in a large composition, but they’re unreliable. Generally, twenty feet (this is highly technical information) is about as close as you can get, no matter how slowly you advance. Any closer, they take off. Pelicans are more expressive, but they’re rarer.” “On the Beach” has plenty of different kinds of birds in it, and these photographs, as well as those of turtles, ducks, horses, and even a camel and a pig at the beach, all feel comfortably right. But, as usual, people and dogs are the stars of Erwitt’s beach shots. (A selection of images from the book can be seen at the Danziger gallery, 415 West Broadway, through December 21.)

Diane Arbus *(1923-71)—Photographs of patients* from New Jersey psychiatric hospitals, from a series that Arbus did in 1970-71; the prints were made by Neil Selkirk, under the auspices of the Arbus estate, and many of these photographs have never been published. Through Jan. 4. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

O. Winston Link—Link devoted the better part of five years (1955-60) to photographing steam engines of the Norfolk and Western railroad. He captures something so visceral about trains and feelings, about trains and our lives, that it’s surprising to learn that he is still largely unknown. In this exhibition, *the pleasure of discovery* is at its optimum. Through Dec. 21. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway.)

Short List—**ZEKE BERMAN,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (through Jan. 11); **HARRY CALLAHAN** and **DOUG AND MIKE STARN,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 11); **GREGORY CREWDSON,** Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St. (through Dec. 28); **MACDUFF EVERTON,** Borden, 560 Broadway (through Jan. 4); **MARY HELLER,** La Maison Française, New York University, 16 Washington Mews (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through Dec. 20); **EVELYN HOFER,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Jan. 18); **MICHAEL KENNA,** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 21); **DAVID LA CHAPELLE,** Liguori, 93 Grand St. (through Dec. 21); **SALLY LARSEN** and **LOUIS DE CLERCQ,** Lowinsky, 575 Broadway (through Jan. 18); **PHILIP LIEBERMAN** and **HARRY ZEITLIN,** Urdang, 23 E. 74th St. (through Jan. 4); **SHEILA METZNER** and **BRADFORD WASHBURN,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through Feb. 2); **YASUMASA MORIMURA,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. (through Dec. 21); **PATRICK NAGATANI,** Baum, 588 Broadway (through Dec. 28); **RUTH THORNE-THOMSEN** and **AARON SISKIND,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Dec. 28); **GEORGE WOODMAN,** Toll, 146 Greene St. (through Jan. 11).

MUSIC

As our cultural historians settle in to the task of considering twentieth-century music in the past tense, they may be struck, as we have been recently, by the importance and diversity of a category of work that is only occasionally thought about as a special genre: works of musical theatre (broadly conceived) for small performing forces. We can think of many reasons why composers have been attracted to the genre. Our century’s great project of stealing from under the nineteenth’s shadow suggests looking past grand opera to the solo cantata, the masque, the madrigal, the mystery play. Multiculturalism (to use a new name for something that isn’t new at all) has suggested exploration of the gamelan and the Noh drama. Especially among the British, postwar austerity and disinclination toward German and Italian models encouraged a different kind of opera. Everywhere today, wildly escalating costs and the conservatism of operatic institutions do the same. It is striking how many of these “small” pieces have been big in their impact on musical imaginations. Schoenberg’s “Pierrot Lunaire,” Stravinsky’s “Renard” and “The Soldier’s Tale,” the Church Parables and English Opera Group stage pieces of Benjamin Britten, Ligeti’s “Aventures” and “Nouvelles Aventures,” Weill’s “Mahagonny Songspiel,” the grab bag of Peter Maxwell Davies’ pieces for the Fires of London—these are some of them. Any composer of dramatic ambitions now considers the possibility of pursuing them in intimate, economical detail.

It was on foundations prepared by these composers that Alexander Goehr built with his “Triptych” of miniature operas (he called the first of them a “dramatic madrigal”), composed between 1968 and 1970. The first is based on the Old Testament story of Ahab’s seizure of Naboth’s vineyard and Jehovah’s response. The second dramatizes Plato’s famous parable about people’s living in a cave and watching shadows. The third deals with a group of Jews in twelfth-century Baghdad who went to the rooftops to await a miraculous transfiguration.

The Manhattan School of Music, which has brought New York its share of important operatic experiences, will present the entire “Triptych” three times on December 11, 13, and 15; in between, on December 12 at 3, one of the school’s orchestras will play two of Mr. Goehr’s orchestral works, at a symposium in which the composer himself will take part.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

HOLIDAY MUSIC

Zephyrus—The vocal quintet performs Christmas music in the elegant setting of an Italian Renaissance-style library. (Retreat House of the Redeemer, 7 E. 95th St. 289-0399. Dec. 11 at 7:30.)

Concordia—Marin Alsop conducts the chamber orchestra in seasonal music that you’ve heard before (including suites from the films “A Miracle on Thirty-Fourth Street” and “It’s a Wonderful Life”) and that you haven’t. In the latter category are “Snowflakes” (a number from Gershwin’s “Broadway Brevities” of 1920) and “Happy Christmas, Little Friend” (a Rodgers and Hammerstein song published in *Life* magazine in 1952), neither of which is thought to have had a professional run-through in recent memory. Judy Kaye, Len Cariou, and Jerry Orbach are among the soloists. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 12 at 8.)

"Christmas Rappings"—A staging of Al Carmine’s eclectic oratorio. (Trinity Presbyterian Church, 422 W. 57th St. Dec. 13-14 at 7:45. Tickets at the door on the nights of the concerts.)

Ensemble for Early Music—Frederick Renz directs a staging of the medieval music drama “Herod and the Innocents.” (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. Dec. 13-14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

New Amsterdam Singers—Clara Longstreth directs Britten’s “A Ceremony of Carols,” Randall Thompson’s “The Peaceable Kingdom,” and other choral works. (St. Ignatius Episcopal Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. Dec. 13 at 8 and Dec. 15 at 4. Tickets at the door on the days of the concerts.)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson conducts the orchestra and the Handel Society of Dartmouth College in seasonal favorites. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 13 at 8 and Dec. 14 at 2.)

Gregg Smith Singers—Performing Morton Gould’s “Christmas Suite,” works by Mozart, and European Christmas carols. (St. Peter’s Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Dec. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-2990.)

Canby Singers—Dan Radtke directs Marian motets, anthems, and carols from the Renaissance to the present. (St. John’s in the Village, 218 W. 11th St., at Waverly Pl. Dec. 14 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Folger Consort—The early-music ensemble plays Renaissance Christmas music. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Dec. 15 at 5.)

Carolling—Choirs, handbell players, and audience join in traditional favorites. (Brick Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 91st St. Dec. 15 at 5. No tickets necessary.)

Central City Chorus—Charles Pilling directs Britten’s “A Ceremony of Carols” (in an arrangement for mixed voices), Hugo Distler’s “The Christmas Story,” and Daniel Pinkham’s “Christmas Cantata.” (Central Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 64th St. Dec. 15 at 7. Admission by contribution.)

New York Choral Society—Robert DeCormier directs the choir in (among other works) Daniel Pinkham’s “Christmas Cantata,” in a concert that also features the folk-singing trio of Peter, Paul, and Mary. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 15 at 7:30 and Dec. 16 at 8.)

Mannes Chamber Singers—Amy Kaiser directs (among other works) Bach’s motet “Jesu, meine Freude,” Byrd’s Mass for Four Voices, and carols by Peter Warlock. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Dec. 16 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—Gary Miller directs works of a holiday orientation, including recent pieces by Conrad Susa and Robert Seeley. Also on the program is a work called “The Long Christmas Dinner: A Cantata for Two Gay Men, an Evangelist, and Male Chorus.” “Evangelist” here refers not to a denizen of revival tents or airwaves, but rather to the narrator of Bach’s Passions; and the cantata, as it turns out, consists of selections from Bach’s choral masterpieces fitted with new words that tell the tale of Steven, who accompanies his lover, Roger, home for Christmas dinner, during which surprising discoveries are made. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 18-19 at 8.)

Handel's "Messiah"—**ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK:** Directed by Lyndon Woodside, with soloists Pamela Hinchman (soprano), Molly Donnelly (mezzo-soprano), Glenn Siebert (tenor), and Richard Zeller (bass-baritone). (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 10 at 8.). . . **NATIONAL CHORAL COUNCIL:** Martin Josman and nineteen other conductors direct the annual audience sing-in, with soloists Beverly Myers (soprano), Jeffrey Dooley (alto), Robert Guarino (tenor), and Thomas Sandri (bass); accompanied by organist Kenneth Bowen. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 11 at 7:30.)... **CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE CHOIRS:** Stephen Sturk directing, with various soloists. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Dec. 13 at 7:30.)... **MASTERWORK CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA:** Directed by David Randolph, with various soloists. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 14 at 8 and Dec. 15 at 2:30.)... **WEST VILLAGE CHORALE:** Gwen Gould directs a sing-in. (Church of St. Luke-in-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Dec. 16 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)... **MUSICA VIVA:** Walter Klauss directs the chorus, orchestra, and audience in a sing-in. (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. Dec. 17 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)... **MUSICA SACRA:** Directed by Richard Westenburg, with Jeanne Ommerlé (soprano), Derek Lee Ragin (countertenor), Vinson Cole (tenor), and David Arnold (baritone). (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 17 at 8.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**LA TRAVIATA,** with Cheryl Studer, Alfredo Kraus, and Vladimir Chernov; conducted by John Fiore. (Dec. 9 and Dec. 12 at 8.)... **DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL,** with Mariella Devia, Barbara Kilduff, Uwe Heilmann, Anthony Laciura, and Matti Salminen; James Levine. (Dec. 10 at 8 and Dec. 14 at 1.)... With Marilyn Mims, Barbara Kilduff, Uwe Heilmann, Anthony Laciura, and Matti Salminen; Richard Woitach. (Dec. 18 at 8.)... **IDOMENEO,** with Carol Vaness, Dawn Upshaw, Susanne Mentzer, Ben Heppner, and Peter Kazaras; James Levine. (Dec. 11, Dec. 14, and Dec. 17, all at 8.)... **AIDA,** with Leona Mitchell, Stefania Toczyska, Lando Bartolini, and James Morris; Rico Saccani. (Dec. 13 at 8.)... With Priscilla Baskerville, Stefania Toczyska, Lando Bartolini, and James Morris; Rico Saccani. (Dec. 16 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

"Triptych"—The North American première of three short music-theatre pieces composed by Alexander Goehr. Staged by Stephen Wadsworth and conducted by David Gilbert. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 540. Dec. 11 and Dec. 13 at 8, and Dec. 15 at 2:30.)

Juilliard Opera Center—Presenting a fully staged production of Samuel Barber's "Vanessa," conducted by Richard Bradshaw. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 769-7406. Dec. 11 and Dec. 13 at 8, and Dec. 15 at 2.)

Lee Hoiby Operas—See under "Bon Appétit!," in Theatre listings. Through Dec. 15.

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ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Erich Leinsdorf conducting. Dec. 10 at 7:30: Mozart's final piano concerto (in B-Flat, K. 595, featuring Alicia de Larrocha), "Masonic Funeral Music," and the nine sections of the Requiem completed by the composer just prior to his death, in December, 1791 (with soprano Roberta Alexander, mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar, tenor John Aler, bass Paul Plishka, and the New York Choral Artists).... ¶ Dec. 12 and Dec. 14 at 8 and Dec. 13 at 11 A.M.: Mozart's March (K. 249) and "Haffner" Serenade, and Schumann's Symphony No. 2.

New York Virtuosi Chamber Symphony—Kenneth Klein conducts Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, Morton Gould's "Spirituals," the première of Raoul Pleskow's "Essay on Quatrains," and Mozart's A-Major Piano Concerto (K. 488, featuring Elaine Comparone, performing on a modern piano instead of her customary harpsichord). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Dec. 11 at 8.)

Apollo Ensemble—In its New York début, the fourteen-member period-instrument chamber orchestra performs three symphonies by Haydn: No. 23, No. 49 ("La Passione"), and No. 57. John Hsu conducts. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 11 at 8.)

Riverside Choral Society—Patrick Gardner conducts the choir, soloists, and the Eighteenth-Century Ensemble in Haydn's "Lord Nelson Mass" as well as shorter works by Haydn and Mozart. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Dec. 12 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Dennis Russell Davies conducts the U.S. première of Arvo Pärt's "Festina Lente," Debussy's "Ibéria" (from "Images"), and Bach's Fifth "Brandenburg" Concerto (featuring violinist Benjamin Hudson, flutist Katherine Fink, and Mr. Davies, playing the harpsichord). Soprano Roberta Alexander is featured as the soloist in Strauss's "Four Last Songs." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Dec. 13-14 at 8 and Dec. 15 at 3.)

Stonewall Chorale—Nancy Vang directs Puccini's "Messa di Gloria," as well as motets by Palestrina, Victoria, Johannes Eccard, and Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck. (Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. Dec. 14 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Vienna Choir Boys—Stephan Aichinger directs Mozart's uncompleted opera "L'Oca del Cairo" (K. 422, here named "The Caliph's Goose"), as well as Mozart's Missa Brevis (K. 63), works by Purcell and Britten, and numerous carols of the season. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 15 at 7:30.)

Ascension Music—Dennis Keene directs the chorus, soloists, and orchestra in Bach's Magnificat, Vivaldi's familiar Gloria, and Giacomo Carissimi's oratorio "Jephthe." (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. Dec. 15 at 8.)

Jupiter Symphony—Charles Neidich is the soloist in Weber's Clarinet Concerto No. 2, as well as in chamber works by Mozart, Schumann, and Ponchielli. Jens Nygaard conducts the orchestra (which also offers Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik"). (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 16 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 and "What the Wild Flowers Tell Me" (an arrangement by Britten of the second movement of Mahler's Third Symphony). Itzhak Perlman is the soloist in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and the première of "Three American Pieces," by Lukas Foss. (92nd Street Y. Dec. 18-19 at 8.)

RECITALS

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing orchestral music by Bach, but on a chamber scale, mostly with one player per part: his Suite No. 2 (featuring flutist Elizabeth Mann), D-Major Harpsichord Concerto (featuring Robert Wolinsky), Cantata No. 51 ("Jauchzet Gott in Allen Landen," featuring soprano Lisa Saffer and trumpeter Chris Gekker), and Fifth "Brandenburg" Concerto (in which Mr. Wolinsky and Ms. Mann are joined by violinist Eriko Sato). (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 10 at 8.)

Rhonda Rider and Lois Shapiro—The cellist and the pianist perform works by Webern, Carter, Donald Martino, and others. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Dec. 10 at 8.)

Chamber Music at the Y—Presenting Mozart's C-Major String Quintet, his Clarinet Quintet, and two of his Flute Quartets. (92nd Street Y. Dec. 10-11 at 8.)

Manuel Barrueco—The classical guitarist's Spanish program includes his own transcription of Isaac Albéniz's "Suite Española." (Uris Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 81st St. Dec. 11 at 7.

Buzzwords

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MUSIC–Cont'd

Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Richard Tauber Centennial Celebration—Many vocal connoisseurs agree that few singers have rivalled tenor Richard Tauber as an interpreter of Viennese opera, operetta, and song—or, thanks to his top hat and monocle, as an emblem of elegant prewar Austria. Thirty musicians (plus an orchestra, conducted by Victor Symonette) gather to pay tribute in the centennial year of his birth, among them singers Licia Albanese, Sári Bárábas, Nedda Casei, Vinson Cole, Barbara Conrad, Franco Corelli, Helga Dernesch, Justino Díaz, Marta Eggerth, Nicolai Gedda, Jerry Hadley, Jerome Hines, Judy Kaye, James King, Sándor Kónya, Alfredo Kraus, Anthony Laciura, Evelyn Laye, Robert Merrill, Jarmila Novotna, Roger Roloff, and Gabriella Tucci. Marcel Prawy, a longtime fixture around the Vienna State Opera, will serve as master of ceremonies for an evening that promises a good deal of reminiscence, some nostalgic music-making, and—we predict with utmost assurance—a rendition of "Wien, Wien, nur du allein" that members of the audience are likely to find themselves humming as they walk out onto 57th Street and go their separate ways. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 11 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Stephanie Brown performs Beethoven's Sonata quasi una Fantasia, Op. 27, No. 2 (the "Moonlight"); violinist Ik-Hwan Bae and cellist Ronald Thomas play Martinů's *Duo*; and all join for Schubert's E-Flat Piano Trio (D. 929). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Dec. 12 at 7:30 and Dec. 15 at 4.)

June Anderson—In her Carnegie Hall début recital, the soprano performs songs by Rossini, Liszt, Debussy, and Turina, as well as works by American composers (Barber, Bernstein, and Rorem). Pianist Steven Blier assists. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 12 at 8.)

Delores Ziegler—Mezzo-soprano, assisted by pianist Massimiliano Murrali, performs songs by Mozart, Brahms, Wolf, Copland, and Britten (three of his "Cabaret Songs"). (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 13 at 8.)

Emanuel Ax and Yo-Yo Ma—The pianist and the cellist perform sonatas by Chopin, Brahms (his first, in E Minor), and Bernstein (an arrangement of his Clarinet Sonata), as well as Beethoven's "Variations on 'Bei Männern' from Mozart's 'Die Zauberflöte.'" (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 13 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Performing Mendelssohn's D-Minor Trio and (with violist Michael Tree) Brahms' A-Major Piano Quartet. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 13-14 at 8.)

Norbert Kraft—Classical guitarist, performing music by Paganini, Ponce, Albéniz, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and R. Murray Schafer. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 14 at 8.)

Partita Chamber Ensemble—The group presents works by Charles Martin Loeffler, Witold Lutoslawski, and Krzysztof Penderecki. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Dec. 15 at 2:45.)

Ilana Vered—The pianist presents twenty-seven virtuosic études, by Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, Moszkowski, and Ezra Laderman (the première of his "Vered Études"). Also on the program is Schumann's rarely performed "Études in the form of free Variations on a Theme by Beethoven," a striking set of seven études based on the Allegretto "funeral march" from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, written in 1833 but not published until fifteen years ago. (92nd Street Y. Dec. 15 at 3.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting works by Johann Friedrich Fasch, Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart, Debussy, and Strauss; with soprano Lisa Saffer. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 15 at 5 and Dec. 17 at 7:30.)

André Watts—The pianist performs works by Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, Liszt (his "Csárdás Macabre" and "Vier Kleine Klavierstücke"), and Debussy (his "Children's Corner" suite), as well as Beethoven's "Thirty-two Variations in C Minor," WoO 80. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 16 at 8.)

Harold Stover—To mark the end of his twenty-four-year tenure at Second Presbyterian Church, the organist performs works by Bach, Jean-François Dandrieu, Brahms, and Widor, as well as his own "Five Preludes on American Folk Hymns." (6 W. 96th St. Dec. 16 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Lauren Wagner—Soprano, assisted by pianist Frederick Weldy, performs songs by Brahms, Wolf, Ives, Paul Bowles, John Musto, and others (including the première of "Metropolitan Tower," a setting by Lori Laitman of a poem by Sara Teasdale). Presented by Joy in Singing. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 16 at 8.)

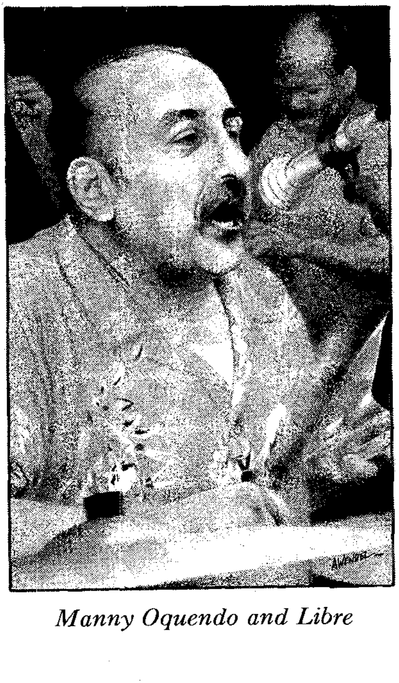
Tisch Center for the Arts Celebration—To toast the endowment and renaming of its arts center, the 92nd Street Y presents an inter-arts program that includes the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio playing the last four movements from Dvořák's "Dumky" Trio, the Modern Jazz Quartet performing jazz classics, soprano Maureen McGovern singing songs of Gershwin, and actress Irene Worth reading works by distinguished writers who have appeared at the Y's Poetry Center in the course of its fifty-two-year history. A benefit concert. (92nd Street Y. Dec. 17 at 7:30.)

Eugenia Zuckerman, Beverly Hoch, and Anthony Newman—The flutist, the soprano, and the harpsichordist perform works by Bach and Handel. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Dec. 18 at 6. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.)

American Academy in Rome Concerts—Featuring works by Elliott Carter, David Diamond, and Richard Trythall, who will be present to discuss their works. (Paul Recital Hall, Juilliard School, 60 Lincoln Center Plaza. Dec. 18 at 8. For information about tickets, call 517-4200.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Metallica—This least clownish of heavy-metal bands strips the genre of ornamentation and campy hysteria, and offers a lean, focussed version of metal's warrior intensity and self-pitying rage. Metallica's aggression is usually introspective—one of the songs on their latest album is called "The Struggle Within"—rather than decorative or misogynistic. These black-clad guys write the occasional dunderheaded song, and their grim and unrelieved seriousness sometimes seems just as ridiculous as big hair and spandex, but more often than not the band accomplishes a genuinely cathartic feat: the lyrics rail about psychological claustrophobia and the terrors of limitation, and the thunderous music blows it all to smithereens. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Dec. 18-20 at 8.)



Manny Oquendo and Libre

Guns N' Roses—With Soundgarden. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Dec. 9-10 and Dec. 13 at 8.)

Moody Blues—Paramount, Madison Square Garden. Dec. 10-11 at 8.

"Highlights in Jazz"—Flip Phillips, Milt Hinton, Oliver Jackson, Howard Alden, and Dan Barrett. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Dec. 12 at 8.)

American Jazz Orchestra—Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Dec. 12 at 8. For information about tickets, call 353-4196.

Manny Oquendo and Libre—Great Hall. Dec. 13 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Judy Niemack and Norman Simmons—New School Auditorium, 66 W. 12th St. Dec. 13 at 6. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

The Spinners—Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Dec. 14 at 7 and 11.

Bruce Cockburn—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 14 at 8.

Helen Schneider—92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Dec. 14 at 8.

Giora Feidman—Three separate programs of klezmer music. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Dec. 15 at 1, 3, and 7.)

"Bending Toward the Light. . . A Jazz Nativity"—An annual festivity. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 219. Dec. 15 at 6 and Dec. 16-17 at 8.)

Roulette—Dec. 13: Billy Bang. . . . ¶ Dec. 14: Terry Jenoure and Kamal Sabir. . . . ¶ Dec. 15: Peter Zummo. (228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Concerts at 9.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Jets—Vs. the New England Patriots, Dec. 15 at 1.

Rangers—Vs. the San Jose Sharks, Dec. 16. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Dec. 18. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the St. Louis Blues, Dec. 10. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Dec. 14. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Dec. 13 at 7:35.

Knicks—Vs. the Seattle Supersonics, Dec. 11. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Celtics, Dec. 14. . . . ¶ Vs. the Nets, Dec. 17. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Knicks, Dec. 10 at 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Denver Nuggets, Dec. 12 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Charlotte Hornets, Dec. 14 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers, Dec. 18 at 7:30. (The Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-516 538-6600; the Rangers and the Knicks at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"The Christmas Revels"—This year the festival has a Gaelic-Celtic theme. Highlights include "waulking songs" (work songs sung while making tweed), an enormous hobby-horse, a Highland dancer who will perform "The Shaking of the Trousers," and morris dancers. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Dec. 13 at 8, Dec. 14 at 3 and 8, and Dec. 15 at 1 and 5.)

Old Merchants House—The nineteenth-century home of the Tredwell family (Seabury, Eliza, and their eight children), complete with all the original furnishings, will reopen to the public on Dec. 15 after a year-long restoration project. (29 E. 4th St. 777-1089. Open Sundays, 1 to 4.)

Readings and a Talk—Dec. 9 at 6: Gregory St. John reads Dickens' "Cricket on the Hearth." (Mid-Manhattan Library, Fifth Ave. at 39th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6:30: Philip Hamburger, Lee Lorenz, and Barbara Nicholls talk about Charles Addams. (National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St. Tickets at the door.). . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 7: Stanley Kunitz reads from his own poetry. (French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Tickets at the door.). . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 8: Russell Banks, David Bradley, Amy Hempel, and Joyce Carol Oates will screen clips from films that have affected them in one way or another, and then they'll read related essays. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. For information about tickets, call 875-4214.). . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 8: E. L. Doctorow, Allen Ginsberg, Sharon Olds, and Toi Derricotte read from their own works, in a benefit performance. (Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 E. 3rd St. Tickets at the door.). . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 8: Philip Levine reads from his own poetry. (Ceres Gallery, 91 Franklin St. 226-4725.). . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 8: Lars Gustafsson and Michael Ondaatje read from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.). . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 8: Jon Swan and others read from letters Mozart wrote during the years 1777-1779. (Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St. 439-8707.)

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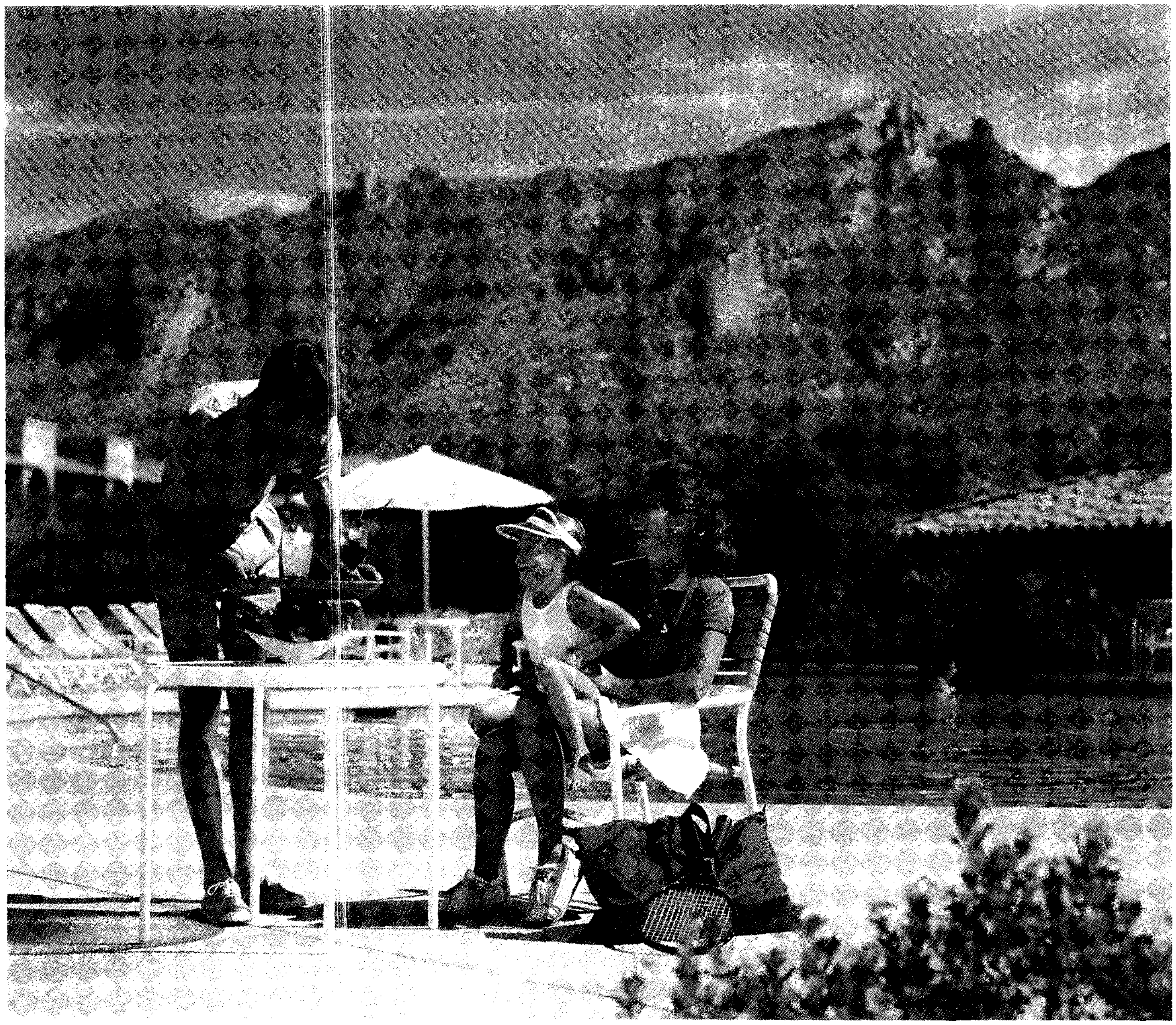

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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15	16	17	18			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 33.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Black Robe" (†).
Theatre 2: "Prospero's Books" (directed by Peter Greenaway), with John Gielgud.
Theatre 3: "My Father Is Coming" (Monika Treut; in English and German).
Theatre 4: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).
Theatre 5: "Convicts" (Peter Masterson), with Robert Duvall, Lukas Haas, and James Earl Jones.
Theatre 6: "Life Is Sweet" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Dec. 12: "Children of Paradise" (1945, Marcel Carné; in French), with Jean-Louis Barrault.
From Dec. 13: "Duelle" (1975, Jacques Rivette; in French), with Bulle Ogier and Juliet Berto; and "Noroit" (1976, Rivette; in French), with Geraldine Chaplin and Bernadette Lafont.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 12: "Little Man Tate" (Jodie Foster), with Foster and Adam Hann-Byrd. From Dec. 13: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 10: "The Fisher King" (Terry Gilliam), with Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges. From Dec. 11: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins.
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 10: "29th Street" (George Gallo), with Danny Aiello, Anthony LaPaglia, and Lainie Kazan. From Dec. 11: "Hook."

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Frankie & Johnny" (Garry Marshall), with Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer.
Theatre 2: "Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "All I Want for Christmas" (†); and (evenings only) "Highlander 2: The Quickening" (Russell Mulcahy), with Christopher Lambert.
Theatre 4: "Strictly Business" (†).
Theatre 5: "Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.
Theatre 6: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.
Theatre 7: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country."

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"The Wages of Fear" (1953, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Folco Lulli, and Peter Van Eyck.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Homicide" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pizza Man."
Theatre 3: "Young Soul Rebels" (Isaac Julien).
Theatre 4: "La Belle Noiseuse" (Jacques Rivette, in French).
Theatre 5: (Matinées only) "The Story of Boys and Girls" (Pupi Avati, in Italian); and (evenings only) "Antonia and Jane" (Beeban Kidron).
Theatre 6: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Man in the Moon" (Robert Mulligan), with Sam Waterston, Tess Harper, and Gail Strickland.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 10: "Little Man Tate" (Jodie Foster), with Foster and Adam Hann-Byrd. From Dec. 11: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins.
Theatre 2: "The Addams Family" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.
Theatre 4: Through Dec. 12: "My Girl." From Dec. 13: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 5: Through Dec. 10: "The Fisher King" (Terry Gilliam), with Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges. From Dec. 11: "Hook."
Theatre 6: "The Addams Family" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Commitments" (Alan Parker).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Cape Fear" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Man in the Moon" (Robert Mulligan), with Sam Waterston, Tess Harper, and Gail Strickland.
Theatre 2: "Billy Bathgate" (†).
Theatre 3: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 4: "Homicide" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "The Addams Family" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 12: "The Addams Family" (†). From Dec. 13: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 3: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
(Matinées only) "All I Want for Christmas" (†); and (evenings only) "Frankie & Johnny" (Garry Marshall), with Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Dec. 12: "Curly Sue" (John Hughes), with James Belushi and Alisan Porter.
From Dec. 13: "The Fisher King" (Terry Gilliam), with Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "December" (Gabe Torres), with Balthazar Getty, Brian Krause, Jason London, Wil Wheaton, and Chris Young.
Theatre 2: "Homicide" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"29th Street" (George Gallo), with Danny Aiello, Anthony LaPaglia, and Lainie Kazan.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Let Him Have It" (Peter Medak), with Tom Courtenay, Eileen Atkins, Clare Holman, Chris Eccleston, and Paul Reynolds.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 10: "Strictly Business" (†). From Dec. 11: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 10: "An American Tail: Fievel Goes West" (Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells), an animated film. From Dec. 11: "Cape Fear" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"My Own Private Idaho" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 10: "Cape Fear" (†). From Dec. 11: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 10: "Cape Fear" (†). From Dec. 11: "Hook."

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 10: "Kafka" (Steven Soderbergh), with Jeremy Irons. From Dec. 11: "Prospero's Books" (Peter Greenaway), with John Gielgud.
Theatre 3: "Overseas" (Brigitte Roüan; in French).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.
Theatre 2: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country."
Theatre 3: "For the Boys" (†).
Theatre 4: "For the Boys"(†).
Theatre 5: "My Girl."
Theatre 6: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 12: "The Fisher King" (Terry Gilliam), with Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges. From Dec. 13: "Bugsy" (Barry Levinson), with Warren Beatty and Annette Bening.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 12: (Matinées only) "All I Want for Christmas" (†); and (evenings only) "Frankie & Johnny" (Garry Marshall), with Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer. From Dec. 13: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"At Play in the Fields of the Lord" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Addams Family" (†).
Theatre 2: "Little Man Tate" (Jodie Foster), with Foster and Adam Hann-Byrd.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Black Robe" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: "An American Tail: Fievel Goes West" (Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells), an animated film.

Loews Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 12: "My Girl." From Dec. 13: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 3: "Prospero's Books" (Peter Greenaway), with John Gielgud.
Theatre 4: Through Dec. 10: (Matinées only) "All I Want for Christmas" (†); and (evenings only) "The Fisher King" (Terry Gilliam), with Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges. From Dec. 11: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins.
Theatre 5: "Little Man Tate" (Jodie Foster), with Foster and Adam Hann-Byrd.
Theatre 6: "The Addams Family" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Addams Family" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 2: "Billy Bathgate" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 17: "Pin" (1988, directed by Sandor Stern), with David Hewlett, Cyndy Preston, and Terry O'Quinn. From Dec. 18: "Testimony" (1988, Tony Palmer), with Ben Kingsley.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse" (†).

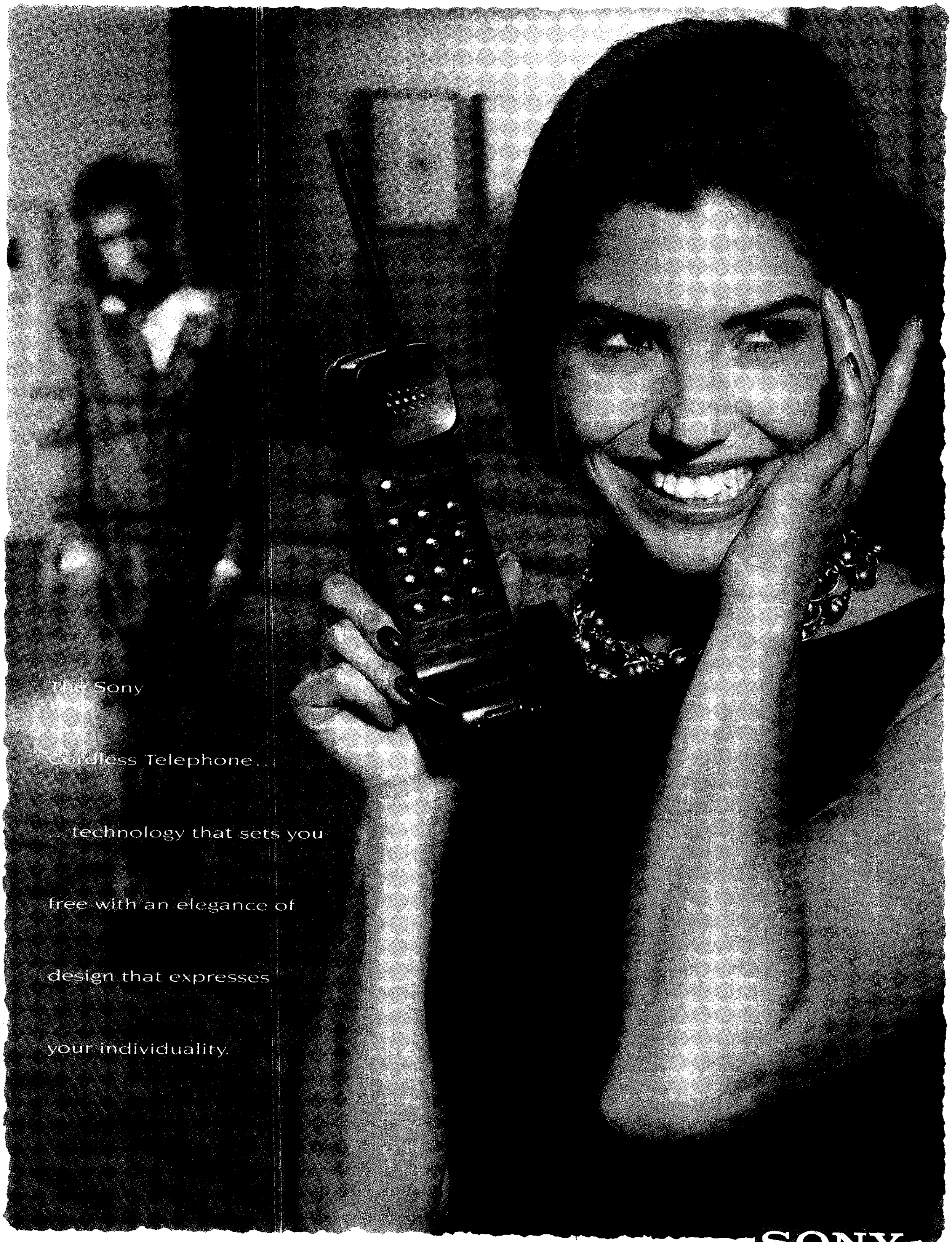
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.
Theatre 2: "The Addams Family" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: "An American Tail: Fievel Goes West" (Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells), an animated film.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Rambling Rose" (†).
Theatre 2: "Exposure" (Walter Salles), with Amanda Pays, Peter Coyote, and Tcheky Karyo.
Theatre 3: "City of Hope" (†).
Theatre 4: "Paris Is Burning" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "At Play in the Fields of the Lord" (†).
Theatre 2: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.
Theatre 3: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 4: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Don't Be Bound By Convention



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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Theatre 5: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Theatre 6: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).

Theatre 7: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country."

Theatre 8: "For the Boys" (†).

Theatre 9: "Cape Fear" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Strictly Business" (†).

Theatre 2: "An American Tail: Fievel Goes West" (Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells), an animated film.

Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "All I Want for Christmas" (†); and (evenings only) "The People Under the Stairs" (Wes Craven).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "An American Tail: Fievel Goes West" (Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells), an animated film.

Theatre 2: "Rambling Rose" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Fisher King" (Terry Gilliam), with Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges.

Theatre 4: "Frankie & Johnny" (Garry Marshall), with Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer.

Theatre 5: "The People Under the Stairs" (Wes Craven).

Theatre 6: "Curly Sue" (John Hughes), with James Belushi, Kelly Lynch, and Alisan Porter.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"For the Boys" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"The Man in the Moon" (Robert Mulligan), with Sam Waterston, Tess Harper, and Gail Strickland.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

Through Dec. 11: "Prospero's Books" (Peter Greenaway), with John Gielgud.

Dec. 12-18: Theatre temporarily closed.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "Barton Fink" (†).

Theatre 2: "Homicide" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Rambling Rose" (†).

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

(Matinées only) "All I Want for Christmas" (†); and (evenings only) "Billy Bathgate" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "City of Hope" (†).

Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski, in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter.

Beacon, B'way at 74th. (496-7070)

"At the Max" (Julien Temple), a concert film of the Rolling Stones.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Cape Fear" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 12: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country." From Dec. 13: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.

Theatre 3: "The Addams Family" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Addams Family" (†).

Theatre 5: Dec. 9: "Little Man Tate" (Jodie Foster), with Foster and Adam Hann-Byrd. Dec. 10: Theatre closed. From Dec. 11: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins.

Theatre 6: Through Dec. 12: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky. From Dec. 13: "Bugsy" (Barry Levinson), with Warren Beatty and Annette Bening.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Black Robe" (†).

Theatre 2: "An American Tail: Fievel Goes West" (Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells), an animated film.

Olympia 1 and 11, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.

Theatre 2: "Strictly Business" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: Through Dec. 10: "House Party 2" (directed by Doug McHenry and George Jackson), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin. From Dec. 11: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins.

Robin Williams and Dustin Hoffman in "Hook"

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 10: "Dead Again" (Kenneth Branagh), with Branagh and Emma Thompson. From Dec. 11: "Hook."

Theatre 3: Through Dec. 10: "Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito. From Dec. 11: "Hook."

Theatre 4: "Ricochet" (Russell Mulcahy), with Denzel Washington and John Lithgow.

Theatre 5: Through Dec. 12: Theatre closed. From Dec. 13: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.

Theatre 6: "Strictly Business" (†).

Theatre 7: Through Dec. 12: Theatre closed. From Dec. 13: "The Last Boy Scout."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.

Theatre 2: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country."

Theatre 3: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"The Addams Family" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).

Theatre 2: "An American Tail: Fievel Goes West" (Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells), an animated film.

REVIVAL HOUSES

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

Dec. 9: "Fanny and Alexander" (1983, directed by Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish).

Dec. 10: "Wild Strawberries" (1957, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Victor Sjöström, Ingrid Thulin, and Gunnar Björnstrand; and "The Virgin Spring" (1960, Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow.

Dec. 11-12: "Autumn Sonata" (1978, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann; and "Through a Glass Darkly" (1962, Bergman; in Swedish), with Harriet Andersson, Gunnar Björnstrand, and Max von Sydow.

Dec. 13: "Kagemusha" ("The Shadow Warrior"; 1980, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Tatsuya Nakadai.

Dec. 14: "Sanjuro" (1963, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune; and "Yojimbo" (1961, Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Mifune.

Dec. 15: "Ran" (1985, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese).

Dec. 16-17: "Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (Kurosawa; in Japanese); and "Throne of Blood" (1947, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune.

From Dec. 18: "Rashomon" (1951, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune, Machiko Kyo, Masayuki Mori, and Takashi Shimura; and "Dodes'ka-den" (1971, Kurosawa; in Japanese).

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Through Dec. 10: "Tabu" (1931, F. W. Murnau; silent); and "Chang" (1927, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack).

Dec. 11-12: "One Wonderful Sunday" (1947, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese); and "The Most Beautiful" (1944, Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Yolo Yaguchi.

Dec. 13-15: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo; and "My Life to Live" (1962, Godard; in French), with Anna Karina.

Dec. 16-17: "Pigs and Battleships" (1961, Shohei Imamura; in Japanese), with Hiroyuki Nagato; and "The Pornographers" (1966, Imamura; in Japanese).

From Dec. 18: "Frida" (1984, Paul Leduc; a Mexican film, in Spanish); and "The Hour of the Star" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Dec. 9: "Smiles of a Summer Night" (1955, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ulla Jacobsson, Eva Dahlbeck, Gunnar Björnstrand, and Jarl Kulle; and "The Magic Flute" (1975, Bergman; in Swedish).

Dec. 10: "Mean Streets" (1973, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, and Amy Robinson; and "Bang the Drum Slowly" (1973, John Hancock), with Michael Moriarty and Robert De Niro.

Dec. 11: "The Decameron" (1971, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian); and "The Canterbury Tales" (1972, Pasolini; in Italian).

Dec. 12: "High Anxiety" (1977, Mel Brooks), with Brooks and Madeline Kahn; and "To Be or Not to Be" (1983, Alan Johnson), with Brooks and Anne Bancroft.

Dec. 13-14: "Wuthering Heights" (1939, William Wyler), with Merle Oberon and Laurence Olivier; and "Jane Eyre" (1944, Robert Stevenson), with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles.

Dec. 15: "Reds" (1981, Warren Beatty), with Beatty, Diane Keaton, Jack Nicholson, and Maureen Stapleton.

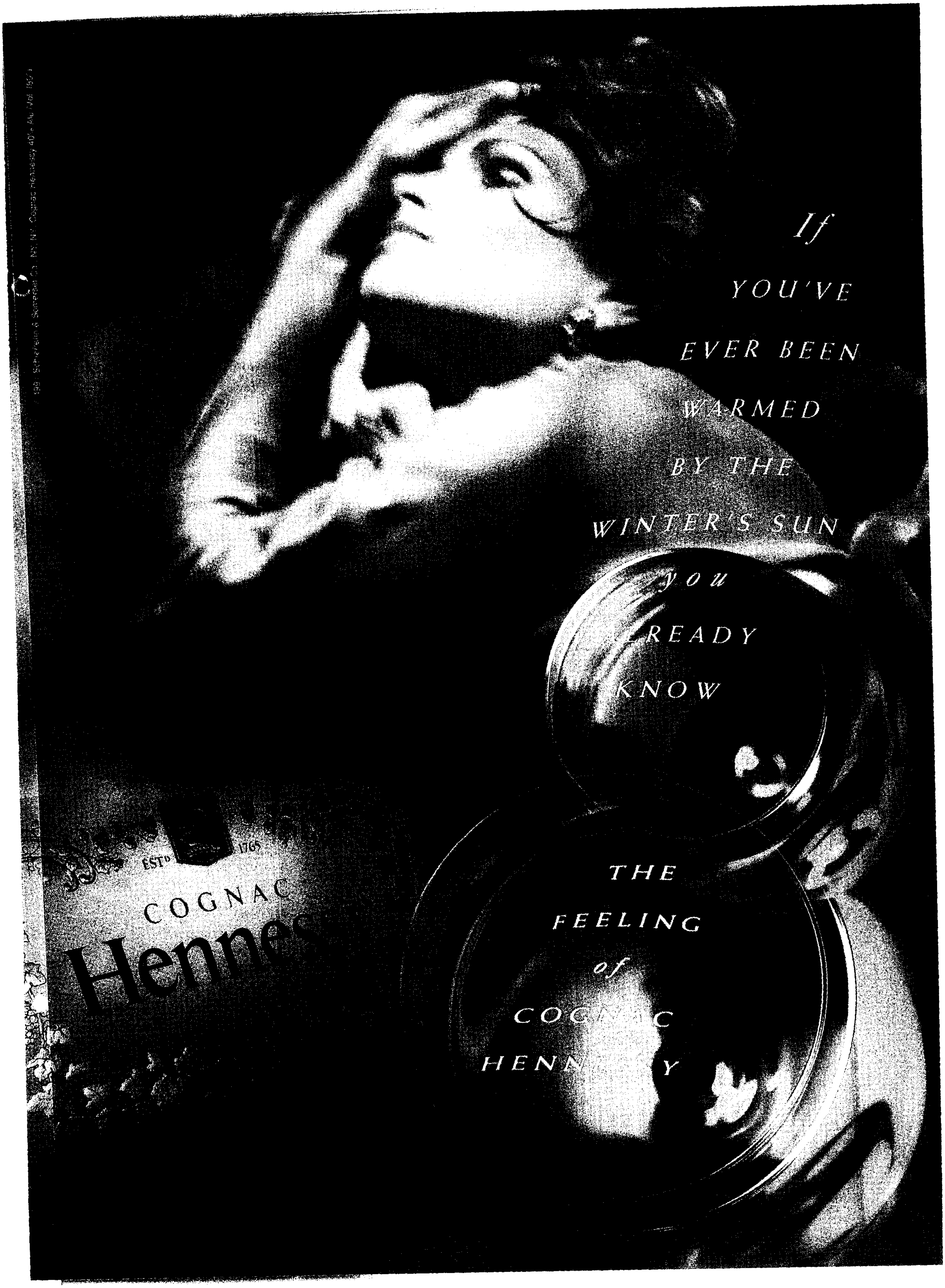
Dec. 16: "L'Avventura" (1959, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti; and "L'Amore" (1948, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani.

Dec. 17: "The Trip to Bountiful" (†) and "Cross Creek" (†).

Dec. 18: "It's a Wonderful Life" (1946, Frank Capra), with James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, Gloria Grahame, Thomas Mitchell, and Henry Travers; and "A Christmas Story" (1953, Bob Clark), with Melinda Dillon and Darren McGavin.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Dec. 9 at 6:30: "Leaving the Harbor" (1990, directed by Walter Ungerer). Mr. Ungerer will be present. . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 2:30: "Mirele Efros" (1939, Joseph Berne; in Yiddish). . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6: "I Want to Be a Mother" (1937, George Roland; in Yiddish), with Leo Fuchs. . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 2:30 and Dec. 15 at 5: "Little Mother" (1938, Joseph Green; a Polish film, in Yiddish), with Molly Picon. . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 3 and 6: "A Season in Hell" (1990, Walter Brock), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 6 and Dec. 16 at 2:30: "Without a Home" (1939, Alexander Marten; a Polish film, in Yiddish), with Ida Kaminska. . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 2:30: "Where Is My Child?" (1937, Henry Lynn and Abraham Leff; in Yiddish), with Celia Adler. . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 6 and Dec. 14 at 2: "The Singing Blacksmith" (1938, Edgar G. Ulmer; in Yiddish), with Moishe Oysher. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 2:30: "The Bill Douglas Trilogy, Parts One and Two: My Childhood and My Ain Folk" (1972/1973, Douglas). . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 5: "Two Sisters" (1938, Ben K. Blake; in Yiddish), with Jennie Goldstein. . . . ¶ Dec. 14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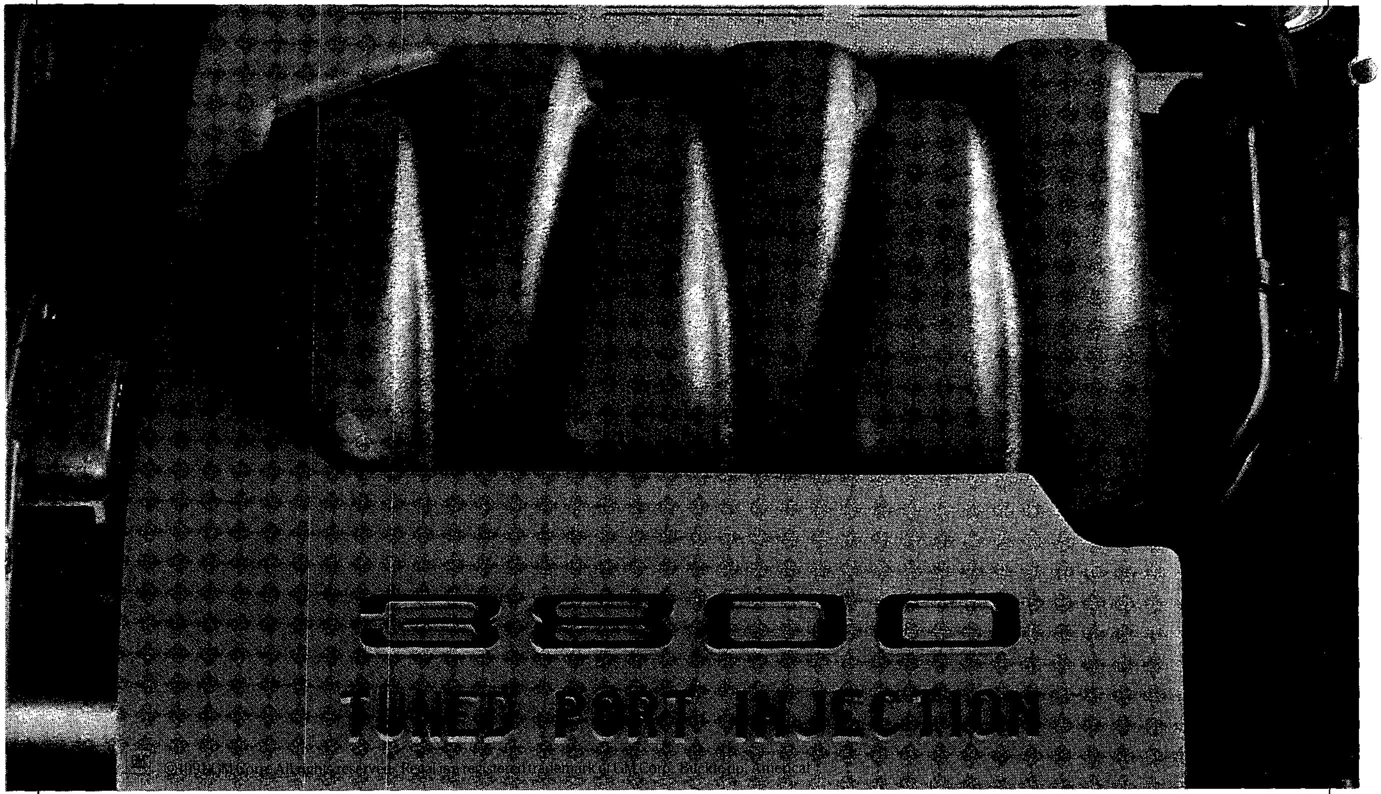

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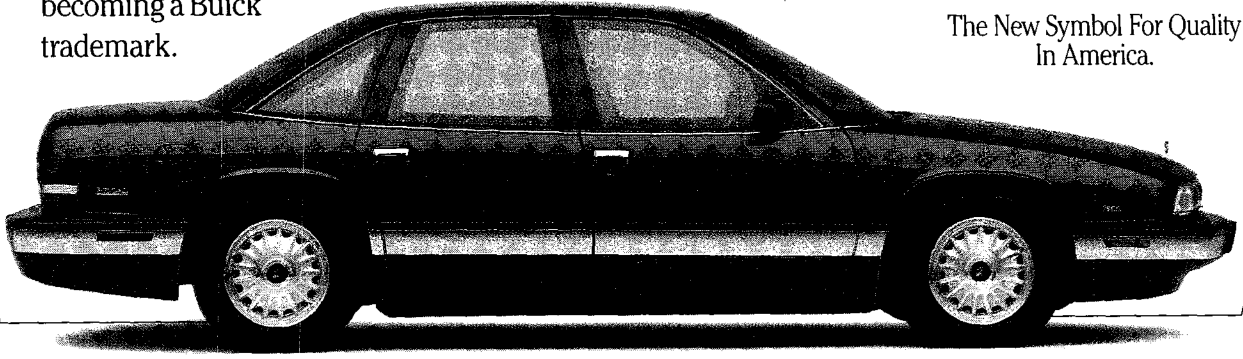

MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

at 5: "The Bill Douglas Trilogy, Part Three: My Way Home" (1978, Douglas). . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 2: "The Bill Douglas Trilogy, Parts One, Two, and Three." . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 2 and Dec. 16 at 6: "A Letter to Mother" (1939, Joseph Green; a Polish film, in Yiddish). . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 2:30 and 6: "The People's Gala Concert" (1991, Semyon Aranovitch; in Russian).

Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Dec. 9 at 2 and 9 and Dec. 10 at 4:15: "On the Town" (1949, Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly), with Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Jules Munshin, Betty Garrett, Vera-Ellen, and Ann Miller. . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 4:15 and Dec. 10 at 6:30: "Sugar Cane Alley" (1983, Euzhan Paley; in French). . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 6:30 and Dec. 10 at 2: "The Station" (1990, Sergio Rubini; in Italian), with Margherita Buy, Rubini, and Ennio Fantastichini. Mr. Rubini will be present. . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 9 and Dec. 11 at 4:15: "On Tour" (1990, Gabriele Salvatores; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 2 and Dec. 12 at 6:30: "Yellow Earth" (1985, Chen Kaige; a Chinese film). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 6:30 and Dec. 12 at 2: "The Footman" (1991, Daniele Lucchetti; in Italian), with Nanni Moretti. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 8:45 and Dec. 13 at 2: "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" (1945, Elia Kazan), with Dorothy McGuire, James Dunn, and Peggy Ann Garner. . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 4:15 and Dec. 14 at 10:15: "Peppermint Soda" (1979, Diane Kurys; in French). . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at [illegible] and Dec. 13 at 4:30: "December" (1991, Antonio Monda; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 6:30 and Dec. 14 at 4: "My Name Is Ivan" (1963, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 8:30 and Dec. 14 at 2: "The Judgment" (1991, Marco Bellocchio; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 10:30 and Dec. 14 at 6: "Eraserhead" (1977, David Lynch), with John Nance. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 8 and Dec. 15 at 4:30: "I Want to Fly" (1990, Maurizio Nichetti and Guido Manuli; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 2 and Dec. 16 at 6:45: "Pather Panchali" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 6:45 and Dec. 16 at 2: "House of Smiles" (1991, Marco Ferreri; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 9 and Dec. 16 at 4:30: "Cabin in the Sky" (1943, Vincente Minnelli), with Ethel Waters, Eddie Anderson, and Lena Horne. . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 9:15 and Dec. 17 at 4:15: "Heat Wave" (1991, Giovanna Gagliardo; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 2: "Jour de Fête" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 6:30 and Dec. 18 at 2: "The Peaceful Air of the West" (1990, Silvio Soldini; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 9 and Dec. 18 at 4:15: "Targets" (1968, Peter Bogdanovich), with Tim O'Kelly and Boris Karloff. . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 6:45: "The Boy with Green Hair" (1949, Joseph Losey), with Pat O'Brien, Dean Stockwell, Robert Ryan, and Barbara Hale. . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 9: "Street Boys" (1990, Marco Risi; in Italian).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Dec. 18 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Stavisky" (1974, Alain Resnais; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo, Anny Duperey, and Charles Boyer.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Dec. 17 at noon: "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944, Vincente Minnelli), with Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, and Mary Astor.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Dec. 14 at 2: "Scorpio Rising" (1963, Kenneth Anger), a short film. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 2:45: "American Graffiti" (1973, George Lucas), with Richard Dreyfuss and Ronny Howard. . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 5: "American Hot Wax" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 2: "Woodstock" (1970, Michael Wadleigh), a film of the 1969 festival.

Goethe House, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (439-8700)—Dec. 12 at 7: "Berlin Alexanderplatz" (1931, Phil Jutzi; in German, with Danish and English subtitles).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Dec. 11-13 at 7 and Dec. 14-15 at 6: "Strand: Under the Dark Cloth" (1990, John Walker). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 9, Dec. 12 at 10, Dec. 13 at 9, Dec. 14-15 at 4, and Dec. 18 at 10: "Cage/Cunningham" (1991, Elliot Caplan). . . . ¶ Dec. 13-14 at 8: A program of seven short films by Peter Herwitz. . . . ¶ Dec. 14-15 and 18 at 8 and 10: "Just Visiting This Planet" (1991, Peter Sempel). . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 8: "Manhatta" (1920, Paul Strand) and "The Wave" (1936, Strand).

Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium, 42nd St. at First Ave.—Two films directed by Hiroshi Shimizu. Dec. 13 at 6:30: "Mr. Thank You" (1936, in Japanese). . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 6:30: "Four Seasons of Childhood, Parts I and II" (1939, in Japanese). (For information about tickets, call 752-0824.)

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

The Addams Family—Misguided graveyard slapstick. One of the most pungent things about Charles Addams' cartoons is the up-front matter-of-factness of their macabre incongruities. The "everyday" contexts (kids playing, carollers carolling) and the devilish twists (a doll set on a guillotine, a cauldron aimed at the carollers) come at the reader all at once. Drawing on the mid-sixties ABC-TV show, which first named the characters who inhabit Addams' stately mansion, the director, Barry Sonnenfeld, and the screenwriters, Caroline Thompson, Larry Wilson, and the uncredited Paul Rudnick, re-create Addams' famous drolleries. But they never find their own equivalent to his suave, sneaky-gleeful subversiveness. Even lying flat on the page, Addams' cartoons have better timing. The moviemakers reintroduce Morticia (Anjelica Huston), Gomez (Raul Julia), and their children, Pugsley (Jimmy Workman) and Wednesday (Christina Ricci), then welcome back Uncle Fester (Christopher Lloyd) in the form of a character who may not be the real ghoul. It's a sitcom plot, catalyzed by routine types: Gomez's shyster lawyer (Dan Hedaya) and the lawyer's loan shark (Elizabeth Wilson). A couple of actors rise above the script. Ricci is uproarious as Wednesday. She has a supernal stillness, and everything she does is skewed; she gets her effects from some other world. Huston pulls off an ultra-refined yet lowdown delivery. Too bad her dialogue is so predictably mordant: by the end, the reverse clichés turn back into clichés. Co-starring the hand of Christopher Hart as Thing.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, Waverly, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

All I Want for Christmas—A pair of incisors wouldn't hurt. This attempt at feel-good Yuletide moviemaking doesn't even have baby teeth. The plot and tone are numbing. The thirteen-year-old hero (Ethan Randall) and his kid sister (Thora Birch) conspire to reunite their divorced parents (Harley Jane Kozak and Jamey Sheridan) on Christmas Eve. Since this is one retro little Christmas movie, Kozak and Sheridan are a dream couple (why did they ever break up?), while Kozak's cold new flame, played by Kevin Nealon, is Wall Street scum. The joke is on the filmmakers: the disarmingly smarmy Nealon gets the most laughs, possibly because his droll depiction of simmering boredom reflects the feelings of the audience. Despite a rushed application of big-studio gloss, the whole movie has the ambience of a TV special, from the soap-opera settings in a cushy, lily-white Manhattan to the grande-dame guest star (Lauren Bacall) and a sprinkling of comics (Andrea Martin, Renée Taylor, Leslie Nielsen) who have next to nothing to do. Robert Lieberman directed; the script is by Thom Eberhardt and Richard Kramer.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Loews Columbus Circle. Matinées only. . . . ¶ Loews Orpheum VII; through Dec. 10, matinées only. . . . ¶ Gemini; through Dec. 12, matinées only.)

American Hot Wax (1978)—Cheerfully, trashily enjoyable, even though the hero, the disc jockey Alan Freed (well played by Tim McIntire), is made so righteous that he's like Buford Pusser fighting the enemy of rock 'n' roll. The moviemakers (the director Floyd Mutrux, the producer Art Linson, the screenwriter John Kaye) should have had more trust in the fifties rock milieu and in their own talents. Freed's secretary, Sheryl (Fran Dreschler), is so entertainingly shrill that she might have had Jean Harlow for a voice teacher; his shovel-faced chauffeur, Mokkie (Jay Leno), teases her and keeps her shrieking in outrage. This is a super B movie. With Laraine Newman, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Moosie Drier as the twelve-year-old president of the Buddy Holly Fan Club (five thousand members). The lively cinematography is by William A. Fraker.—P. K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Dec. 14.)

At Play in the Fields of the Lord—With Tom Berenger, John Lithgow, Daryl Hannah, Aidan Quinn, Tom Waits, and Kathy Bates; directed by Hector Babenco. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Beekman, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Barton Fink—The Coen brothers' macabre comedy about a blocked writer in 1941 Hollywood is densely packed with allusions, clever dialogue, ingenious visual jokes, startling plot twists, and imaginative atmospheric effects, yet it feels thin. It's an empty tour de force, and what's dismaying about the picture is that the filmmakers (Joel Coen directed, Ethan Coen produced, and they wrote the script together) seem inordinately pleased with its hermetic meaninglessness. Fink (John Turturro), the protagonist, is a left-wing New York playwright—obviously based on Clifford Odets—who signs a contract to write screenplays in Hollywood. His first assignment is a wrestling picture for Wallace Beery. He can't get started on it: he sits in his seedy, depressing hotel room, stares at the typewriter, and feels defeated. The Coens treat this emblematic figure of thirties culture with merciless contempt. They quickly expose him as a phony, a buffoon, and a talentless hack, and then spend the rest of the movie punishing him. The picture is designed to visit ever more grotesque indignities on a character who's pitiful from the outset; there's not much fun in that. And there's no fun at all in Turturro's hyperactive performance: the way he plays this leftist intellectual, the movie might as well have been called "The Nutty Pinko." Also with John Goodman, Michael Lerner, John Mahoney, Judy Davis, and Tony Shalhoub. The movie won awards for best picture, best director, and best actor (Turturro) at the 1991 Cannes Film Festival.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/9/91.) (Carnegie Hall Cinemas).

Beauty and the Beast—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi," from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantle clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East

Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Billy Bathgate—A refined, stately gangster movie, based on E. L. Doctorow's refined, stately novel about the decline and fall of Dutch Schultz. The director, Robert Benton, and the screenwriter, Tom Stoppard, are scrupulously faithful to the book. Their studied, reverential approach has a perverse kind of appropriateness: it reflects all too accurately the novel's high-art air of importance. (Doctorow's literary exquisiteness had already drained the vulgar energy from the material.) Actually, the movie is marginally livelier than the novel, but this sort of story is much more familiar to moviegoers than to readers of prestigious fiction: the filmmakers' evocation of violent crime in Prohibition-era New York can only be seen in the context of the rich gangster-movie tradition, and this picture simply doesn't have the raw vitality and the headlong drive that the classics of the genre—from the original "Scarface" to "Once Upon a Time in America"—have led us to expect. The movie sustains our interest mostly by virtue of two remarkable performances. Steven Hill plays Schultz's middle-aged business manager, Otto Berman, and his acting is miraculously nuanced and complex: we feel as if we can read the whole history of the gang's triumphs and disasters in Berman's cunning, weary eyes. And Hoffman, as Schultz, is terrific. He's very funny and volatile. Playing a mean, stupid man, Hoffman—probably the most intelligent actor of his generation—is terrifyingly precise about the human deficiencies that make a great, legendary crook. Also with Loren Dean (in the title role) and Nicole Kidman.—T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, and 86th Street East Twin. . . . ¶ Loews Columbus Circle. Evenings only.)

Black Robe—An unusual and absorbing new film about North American Indians and a French Jesuit missionary in the early seventeenth century. It's a culture-clash drama in which the most important conflicts take place in the realm of the spirit. The main characters are an excruciatingly pious young priest called Father Laforgue (Lothaire Bluteau) and an Algonquian chief named Chomina (August Schellenberg). Their world views are so radically opposed that at times the two men seem unable to acknowledge each other as human. The screenwriter, Brian Moore, and the director, Bruce Beresford, show extraordinary respect for the stubborn, almost impenetrable otherness of their historical characters. This is a movie we have to feel our way into—tentatively, gradually—and it accumulates emotional force as it goes along. The film is an adventure story in the truest sense: the filmmakers lead us into unknown territory, and keep pushing us farther and farther on, until, by the end, we find ourselves deep in the wilderness of the seventeenth-century consciousness. Bluteau's performance is enervated, but the script is superbly intelligent, the direction is confident, and Schellenberg's Chomina is magnificent. The picture moves on a steady, powerful flow of ideas and emotions, and it stirs in us a sense of discovery. Based on Moore's 1985 novel of the same name. Also with Aden Young, Sandrine Holt, and Tantoo Cardinal. Cinematography by Peter James.—T.R. (11/18/91) (Angelika Film Center, 68th St. Playhouse, and Metro Cinema.)

Cape Fear—Martin Scorsese's new film is a remake of a bluntly effective 1962 thriller about a middle-class family—husband, wife, teen-age daughter—who are terrorized by a devious, implacable psychopath. The original (which was based on a pulp novel by John D. MacDonald and directed by J. Lee Thompson) had the straight-ahead construction of a horror movie, and it never pretended that what it was doing was good for us. The remake muddies the waters with self-consciousness: Scorsese and the screenwriter, Wesley Strick, have loaded the movie with apparent moral ambiguities, facile ideas about guilt and redemption, and explicit attempts to portray the scuzzy villain as a mythic nemesis. This picture is much flashier and more assaultive than the original (and it's also, at two hours and eight minutes, a hell of a lot longer). But the Christian/mythological subtext that Scorsese dredges up and places in the foreground has the effect of increasing our emotional distance from the story. Besides, it isn't true subtext; it's stuff that has been imposed on, rather than discovered in, the material. This is still, at heart, a picture whose sole aim is to give its audience huge, bowel-loosening shocks; the veneer of moral seriousness and psychological complexity that Scorsese brings to the enterprise feels like an attempt to convince himself that he's not doing what he's doing. The movie keeps insisting that the gruelling experience it's putting us through is really meant to edify us; it drags us into the mud and then tells us that we haven't got dirty. This is Scorsese's worst picture—an ugly, incoherent piece of work. With Robert De Niro (frenetic but thoroughly uninteresting as the villain), Nick Nolte, Jessica Lange, Juliette Lewis, and Illeana Douglas. Joe Don Baker, playing the small part of a private detective, gives the liveliest performance; he's so good that you wish he were playing De Niro's role. The stars of the 1962 version, Robert Mitchum and Gregory Peck, make brief appearances, and the score is a reorchestration of Bernard Herrmann's original music.—T.R. (12/2/91) (Bay Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Baronet, and Coronet; through Dec. 10. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; starting Dec. 11.)

City of Hope—This panorama of Northeastern urban life is filled with intrigue and conflict. Yet it plays as if it were still on the drawing board. The writer, director, and editor, John Sayles, lays out the action so that every class and ethnic group participate in the corruption and the possible redemption of fictional Hudson City, New Jersey. In the major plot developments, a white professor is accused of having sexually approached one of two black kids who mugged him, and an urban-renewal project leads to arson and death. Sayles sketches the racial and economic agitations that leave the city in a state of tense inertia. The naturalistic design doesn't allow the three dozen characters to spring to unruly, independent life. Nick (Vincent Spano), the morally drifting son of the city's major contractor, is a poor choice for a unifying hero. He's unspecific and archetypal—an overgrown mixed-up kid. In keeping with today's delayed maturity cycle, he's twenty-eight, not eighteen. The enormous cast includes Joe Morton, Tony LoBianco, Barbara Williams, and Josh Mostel.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza.)

Cross Creek (1983)—Very loosely based on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' semiautobiographical tales of her years in an orange grove in the Florida swamps, this movie, directed by Martin Ritt, suggests a child's storybook version of women's liberation. Everything is lighted to look holy, and whenever the score isn't shimmering and burnishing, nature is twittering. It's all pearly and languid, and more than a little twerpy—it's one long cue for "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'." The heroine is envisioned as a muted, passive artist who soaks up the local color, and the audience is left to watch her soak. As Mrs. Rawlings, Mary Steenburgen is withdrawn; she has a tight, little-girl voice, and she seems to count to ten before she speaks—she comes across as a lyrical stiff. The movie is lulling, in a semi-stupefying way. Most of it is sun-coated and sugar-cured. But Rip Torn plays a Cracker on a grand scale; he's too powerful for sweetening. It's a rampaging role, but Torn doesn't seem to be afraid of anything, and he gives a demonstration of a wild-man actor's art. The picture would be stone cold without it. With Alfre Woodard as Geechee, and Peter Coyote—he has a Jiminy Cricket charm as Norton Baskin, who becomes Mrs. Rawlings' second husband. Also with Malcolm McDowell as Maxwell Perkins (who just happens to be in the neighborhood because he has been visiting "Ernest in Key West"), Dana Hill, Cary Guffey, Joanna Miles, John Hammond, and Toni Hudson. The script is by Dalene Young; the cinematography is by John A. Alonzo.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 17.)

Europa Europa—This superb film by the Polish director Agnieszka Holland is based on the memoirs of Salomon Perel, a German Jew who spent much of the Second World War passing for Aryan in an élite Hitler Youth academy. The movie dramatizes this almost inconceivable survival story with a surprisingly light touch. It bounds from one jaw-dropping episode to the next with the speed and the unnerving neutrality of a picaresque adventure, and never pauses to judge its ambiguous hero; it's content to let the ironies of his situation collect around him like reflections in dressing-room mirrors. His family's flight from the Nazis begins in 1938, on the eve of his bar mitzvah. Solly (played by a remarkable young actor, Marco Hofschneider) lands first in Lodz, Poland, and then in the Soviet Union, where he becomes a star pupil in a Communist school. After the Wehrmacht invades Russia and takes him prisoner, he reincarnates himself as an orphaned "pure" German, an Aryan child wandering in the barbaric eastern wilderness. We remain, however, constantly aware (as he is) of what his Nazi disguise conceals—his circumcised penis, the irreversible and unambiguous sign of his identity as a Jew. Holland uses this physical evidence of Solly's Jewishness as the fulcrum of the movie's delicately balanced narrative and moral tensions. Also with Julie Delpy, Andre Wilms, Halina Labonarska, and Rene Hofschneider. The real Salomon Perel appears, as himself, in the movie's final scene. In German and Russian.—T.R. (7/1/91) (Lincoln Plaza.)

For the Boys—With Bette Midler and James Caan, directed by Mark Rydell (Reviewed in this issue.) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse—Fax Bahr and George Hickenlooper directed this engulfing, brilliantly crafted documentary about the disaster-strewn production of Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now." But much of the credit should go to Eleanor Coppola, Francis's wife, who shot sixty hours of behind-the-scenes footage on location in the Philippines, caught her husband's haywire visionary mood swings on audiotape, and, in addition to joining the ranks of the interviewees, reads portions of her journal, "Notes." Her camerawork and prose have an unadorned limpidity. They provide refreshing counterpoint to the grandiose rhetoric of her husband's attempt to relocate Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" in a Vietnam War adventure story. Bahr and Hickenlooper present the extraordinary spectacle of a filmmaker at the peak of his clout, banking everything on his ability to pull inspiration out of the fire, and getting scorched. While enduring the dismissal of one lead actor, the heart attack of his replacement, a ruinous typhoon, and a constant struggle with the script, Coppola keeps insisting that his experiences will enrich his movie. Bahr and Hickenlooper support Coppola's point of view. Their film is less important for its conclusions (they seem to feel that Coppola achieved artistic success) than for its depiction of the delusionary power of filmmaking. This movie, not "Apocalypse Now," is about what happened to Coppola in the jungle, and here he becomes a spellbinding tragic hero.—M.S. (Film Forum.)

Marcelia Cartaxo in "The Hour of the Star"

"The Hour of the Star" (playing December 18-19 at Film Forum 2) is a haunting, wrenching, and startlingly funny movie about a poor young typist named Macabéa (played by Marcelia Cartaxo), a peasant woman from the northeast of Brazil transplanted to the city of São Paulo. From a novel by the late Clarice Lispector, this 1985 movie combines the familiar and the bizarre. It blends elements of kitchen-sink drama, such as a crowded tenement apartment, a thankless job, and a hopeless flirtation, with elements of Fellini-esque whimsy, such as a genuine fortune-teller who sometimes gets her signals crossed. The film rises above any taint of forced despair or tinny surrealism. The director, Suzana Amaral, fills out the poverty-stricken settings with a wealth of empathic, humorous details. She takes the story into a charged realm of feeling.

This movie isn't about anything as general as "the human condition." It's about the wants, the stubbornness, and the quirkiness of a woman pulling herself out of an inhuman condition. Macabéa is homely, dirty, and backward. But you can see why her office manager attempts to overlook her slowness and sloppiness as a typist. You can understand why her three roommates and her worldly colleague, Gloria, condescend to her but also try to help her. You can even accept that a preening metalworker would fall into a quasi romance with Macabéa—before dumping her for Gloria. Macabéa is an unformed lump of originality. She's infuriating and poignant, and, what's more surprising, fascinating. Macabéa's ignorance allows her moments of bliss: Western culture, high or low, is still fresh to her. Her character inspires Amaral to get at the strange beauties hidden amidst squalor. She glories in Macabéa's outbursts of transcendence, especially the character's wild dance to "The Blue Danube." Amaral conjures all the heartbreak and magic of Macabéa's physical and mental world. Amazement is an appropriate response.

HOMICIDE—This urban cop thriller, written and directed by David Mamet, is a genre picture with delusions of grandeur. The plot is designed to give the hero—a decent and fairly sensitive Jewish homicide detective named Bobby Gold (Joe Mantegna)—a whopping existential crisis. Gold, who is thoroughly assimilated, becomes involved in a case that has anti-Semitic overtones, and he's forced to reëvaluate his sense of Jewish identity. He discovers a conspiracy, hooks up with a clandestine Jewish-defense organization, and finally blows up the printing press of an Aryan-supremacist group—a mission that makes him late for an important stakeout. The plot is ridiculous, but Mamet dramatizes this gamy material with tremendous solemnity. The funereal pace and the melancholy, reflective tone seem intended to mask the story's essential recklessness and irresponsibility, and perhaps also to conceal the trite cop-movie mechanics of its construction. Mamet uses the controversial, hot-button issue of cultural identity simply to give his hero the obligatory "personal" stake in

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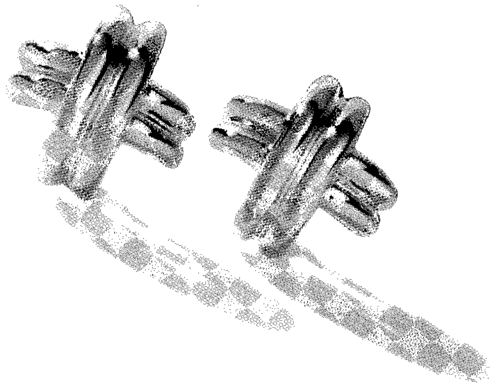

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

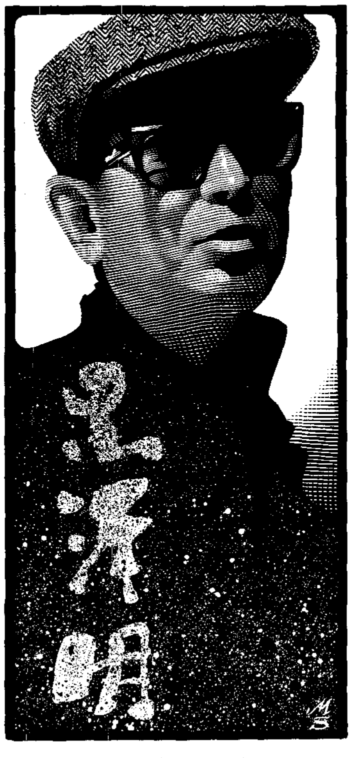
the case, and as a result the movie gives off a pungent odor of opportunism. This picture, for all its pretensions to significance, is as alienating and depressing as the local news: it turns ethnic and racial differences into cheap thrills. Also with William H. Macy.—T.R. (11/18/91) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Jour de Fête (1950)—As a director, Jacques Tati has a spare, quick, improvisatory touch. As a comedian, buoyancy and impersonal eccentricity in the face of disaster are his special style. In this film, shot in the village of Sainte-Sévère-sur-Indre, with villagers playing many of the parts, the tall, ungainly Tati is the postman who attends the village fair and sees a documentary on the advanced, mechanized American postal system. He is overcome with enthusiasm for speed, and though he has no helicopter, he has his bicycle. He takes off, and what happens is unpredictable, even if you've already seen the movie—it's all so odd you forget it. Still, the film's melancholy humor is probably a little too mild or quaint for most American tastes. Written by Tati and Henri Marquet. It's not silent (it has sound effects and music), but it's not in French, either; Tati has devised a kind of unintelligible yet expressive gibberish. It's like the talk of robots who've got fouled up.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 17.)

Life Is Sweet—In this wonderful new comedy, the English writer and director Mike Leigh ("High Hopes") takes us into the domestic life of a lower-middle-class family in Middlesex. The characters are, by conventional standards, ordinary, but they aren't dreary, and their actions aren't predictable; the movie doesn't treat anyone as a type. Wendy (Alison Steadman) is an attractive, ebullient middle-aged woman who's always on the move, always doing something. Her husband, Andy (Jim Broadbent), is an amiable dawdler, a guy who starts ambitious home-improvement projects and never quite gets around to finishing them. They're the parents of a ludicrously mismatched set of twins: Natalie (Claire Skinner), a quiet, serious, dignified girl; and Nicola (Jane Horrocks), who hates her life and responds with snarls and contemptuous epithets to even the most innocuous attempts at conversation. Leigh doesn't give us an obvious narrative hook—a clear sense of what the story is going to be about or what sort of dramatic revelations he might have in store for us. And, despite Nicola's bratty outbursts, the tone is light and casual. Leigh doesn't manipulate our responses; he roughs them up a little, though. By means of a dense texture of tiny behavioral details and disconcerting shifts of style, he attempts to reshuffle our emotions. He prepares us to accept the moments of piercing, almost miraculous clarity that arise, as if by accident, at the end of his best films. In this picture, he builds up to a conversation between Wendy and Nicola that is perhaps the most extraordinary scene in recent movies. Also with Stephen Rea and Timothy Spall.—T.R. (11/4/91) (Angelika Film Center.)

My Own Private Idaho—This new feature by the independent filmmaker Gus Van Sant is like an exploded version of his previous films "Mala Noche" and "Drugstore Cowboy," and it scatters meanings all over the landscape. It's a beautiful disaster, like a bomb test in the middle of nowhere. The movie is set primarily in Van Sant's familiar territory—the seedier parts of Portland, Oregon—and its main characters are a pair of young hustlers, Mike (River Phoenix) and Scott (Keanu Reeves), who sell their bodies on the street. Mike is a narcoleptic: every time he blacks out, he has lyrical dreams composed of imagery from his childhood. Scott, who is the son of Portland's mayor, is modelled on Shakespeare's Prince Hal; the Falstaff character here is a scruffy gay cokehead called Bob (William Richert), and his scenes with Scott are stylized variations of incidents from both parts of "Henry IV" (hence also variations on Orson Welles' "Chimes at Midnight"). Van Sant takes a lot of chances, and visually the movie is so imaginative, so fiercely alive, that it carries us along. But when the over-all design of the picture becomes clear, we feel cheated rather than enlightened. Scott turns into a villain; Bob is ennobled as a symbol of outlaw freedom; and Mike takes on the aura of a holy fool, the Prince Myshkin of the Portland meat market. Van Sant's vision is disappointingly trite and schematic. Phoenix, however, gives a superbly intelligent and intuitive performance. The original screenplay is by Van Sant. Eric Alan Edwards and John Campbell did the cinematography.—T.R. (10/7/91) (Angelika Film Center, 59th Street East Cinema, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Paris Is Burning—Jennie Livingston's documentary about gay black and Latino men who compete in drag balls is a beautiful piece of work—lively, intelligent, exploratory. The drag queens we see here seem to be holding up a mirror to the world of the empowered as they see it in movies, TV shows, and magazines. In the ballroom, some present themselves as elegant, glamorous women in designer outfits, and walk with the hip-swinging slouch of runway models, while others adopt more mundane personas: college students (of both sexes); military men; Wall Street businessmen; aristocrats at play, dressed for yachting or riding to hounds. The criteria by which all these turns are judged is verisimilitude—"realness." The material is almost too rich, too suggestive. Everything about the ball culture signifies so blatantly and so promiscuously that the movie induces a kind of semiotic daze. Livingston is smart enough not to reduce her subjects to the sum of their possible meanings, perhaps because she realizes that the way the drag performers manipulate image and fetishes and the iconography of popular culture is for many of them a sophisticated form of humor. The most self-aware of the gay men in this picture revel in the ironies of their social and sexual identities, and Livingston makes us appreciate the comic grace and the strange wisdom of that approach. Like all the best documentary filmmakers, she does her subjects the honor of allowing them to retain some of their mystery. Edited by Jonathan Oppenheim.—T.R. (3/25/91) (Quad Cinema.)


At the 8th St. Playhouse, a program of films directed by Akira Kurosawa

Pather Panchali (1954)—This first film by the masterly Satyajit Ray—possibly the most unembarrassed and natural of directors—is a quiet reverie about the life of an impoverished Brahman family in a Bengali village. Beautiful, sometimes funny, and full of love, it brought a new vision of India to the screen. Though the central characters are the boy Apu (who is born near the beginning) and his mother and father and sister, the character who makes the strongest impression on you may be the ancient, parasitic, storytelling relative, played by the eighty-year-old Chunibala, a performer who apparently enjoyed coming back into the limelight after thirty years of obscurity—her wages paid for the narcotics she used daily. As "auntie," she is so remarkably likable that you may find the relationship between her and the mother, who is trying to feed her children and worries about how much the old lady eats, very painful. Ray continued the story of Apu in "Aparajito" and "Apur Sansar (The World of Apu)," and the three films, all based on a novel by B. B. Bandapaddhay, became known as The Apu Trilogy. (Robin Wood's study, "The Apu Trilogy," does the film justice.) Cinematography by Subrata Mitra; music by Ravi Shankar. In Bengali.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 15-16.)

Rambling Rose—A nineteen-year-old live wire named Rose (Laura Dern), an unconventional housekeeper and nanny, brings sexual electricity to an eccentric middle-class household in sleepy Depression-era Georgia. She throws herself at Daddy (Robert Duvall) and introduces thirteen-year-old Brother (Lukas Haas) to the mysteries of the female orgasm. By the time she leaves, her good-hearted promiscuity inspires the freethinking Mother (Diane Ladd) to new heights of proto-feminist passion. Scripted by Calder Willingham from his 1972 novel, this piece of screwball Americana pokes along with an alternately prickly and tender charm. The director, Martha Coolidge, isn't an ace at pacing or shaping scenes, but she elicits superb performances from her male leads. Duvall jettisons his usual rural mannerisms, giving a subtle, fluid, full-bodied characterization of a starchy patriarch with off-the-wall eloquence. Haas is irresistibly sly and rapt as an adolescent whose lustful curiosity turns to love. Coolidge restrains Ladd—she's touchingly dissociated as a spacey woman with insight and a hearing problem. But Dern's self-conscious ardor idealizes Rose even more than the script does. And the movie hits a bad bump when it weds the celebration of a free spirit to antisexist melodrama. Still, at its best, it's ticklish and original—sweetly raunchy.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, Worldwide Cinemas, and Cinema 3.)

Strictly Business—This "secret of my success" story attempts to win the Congeniality Award in the young-black-filmmakers competition. It fails, because of the sour stereotypes in Pam Gibson and Nelson George's script and the bop-on-the-noggin direction by Kevin Hooks. The story is a simple matter of tit for tat: buppie Joseph C. Phillips helps street-hip Tommy Davidson rise out of the mailroom at a high-stakes real-estate firm; in return, Davidson teaches Phillips how to dress for sexual success with voluptuous bohemian Halle Berry, who'd otherwise be too "fly" for the slick executive. At the start, Phillips, the upwardly mobile black, is portrayed as an imitation-white zombie; Davidson, the homeboy, as a naïve slacker; and Berry, an aspiring night-club manager, as a piece of meat ("That ham is cooked, glazed, and ready to be sliced"). They're supposed to come together and fuse, but the result is more of a monster mash.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through Dec. 10.)

The Trip to Bountiful (1985)—Geraldine Page gives a controlled, all-out performance as Carrie Watts, an old-age pensioner who wears seat-sprung housedresses and lives in a tiny apartment in Houston with her sad, defeated son and his shrill wife, who keeps picking on her. The movie—a weeper—is about Carrie's longing to escape and return to Bountiful, the Gulf Coast town where she grew up; she runs away, gets on a bus headed in the right direction, and lives out her dream. Directed by Peter Masterson, from Horton Foote's adaptation of his 1953 teleplay (Lillian Gish starred in it on TV and Broadway), it's a "spiritual" picture—a tribute to the decency of the common people who endure by doing the best they can, and it has the glow that movies get when they're about the need to have compassion. The camera is meant to be the mirror of Carrie's soul, but we look in that mirror for so long that finally all we see is Geraldine Page acting. Foote can't make poetry out of material as laundered and denatured as what he comes up with here. The movie is intended to be a hymn, but all he and Masterson can do is give some of the characters a limp, anesthetized grace. With John Heard as the son, Carrie Glynn as the daughter-in-law, Rebecca DeMornay as a soldier's young wife, and Richard Bradford as a Texas sheriff. Cinematography by Fred Murphy. Academy Award for Best Actress (Page).—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 17.)

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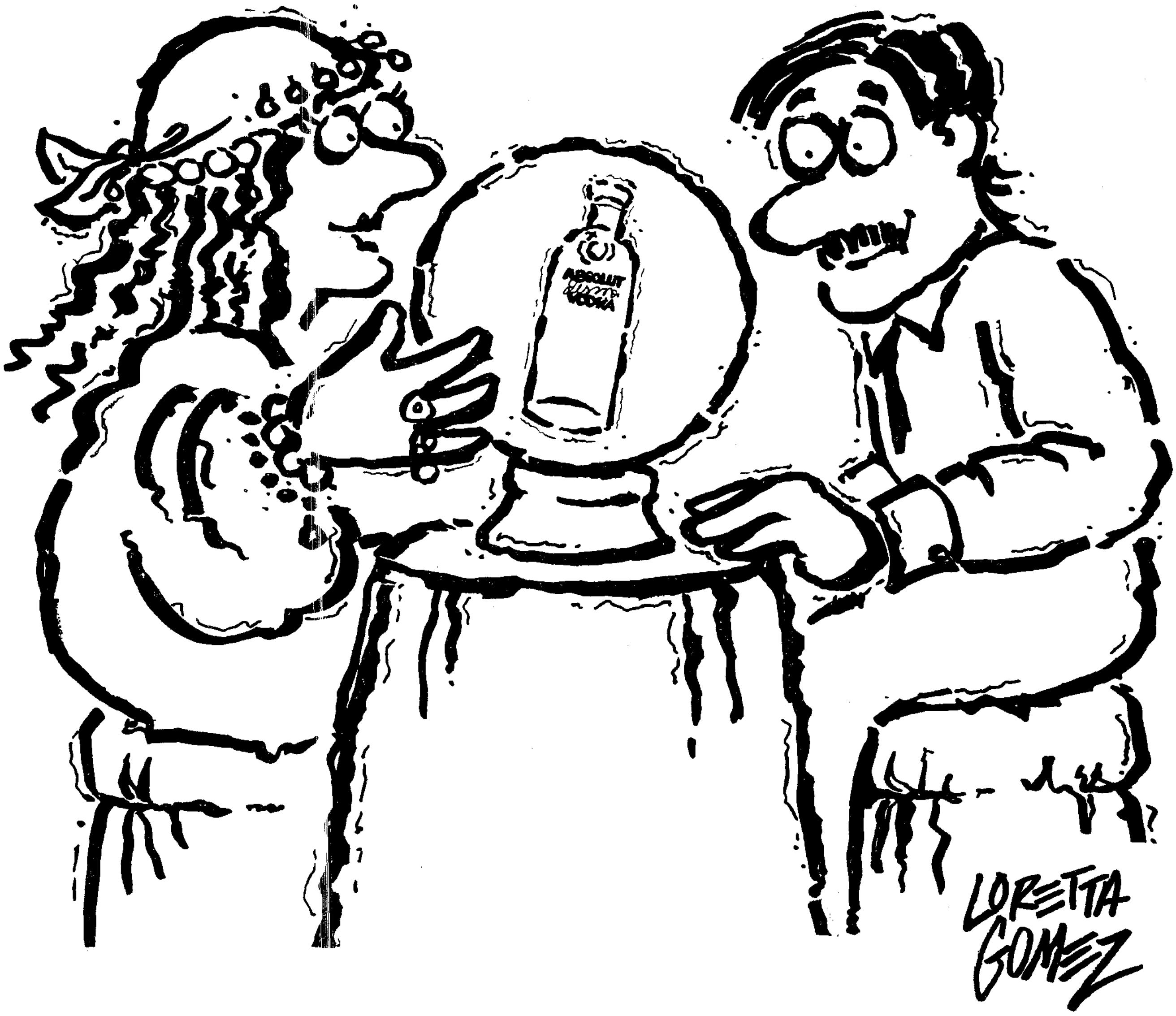

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A YEAR has passed since President Bush signed the Clean Air Act of 1990, which was widely hailed as the most sweeping piece of environmental legislation yet enacted, and as proof that the Bush Administration took environmental matters seriously. In recent months, that assumption has been called in question by a number of executive decisions involving matters like the recycling of municipal waste, the burning of lead batteries, and the right of public utilities to renovate their plants without improving pollution controls at the same time. A common element in almost all these cases has been the behind-the-scenes intervention of a body called the Council on Competitiveness, which is headed by Vice-President Dan Quayle.

Last summer, the council became involved (though the link to competitiveness was not readily apparent) in the issue of wetlands preservation. Responding to the complaints of a group of oil-and-gas companies, utilities, and real-estate and farming interests, it promulgated a new definition of a wetland, which would have decontrolled nearly half of the hundred million acres previously thought to be protected from development, including large parts of the Florida Everglades and the Great Dismal Swamp. Two weeks ago, the Vice-President's office announced that the council had not intended such a drastic result, and that the Administration would, after all, stick with the hundred-million-acre figure. So the wetlands debate has, for now, an ending that environmentalists can see as a happy one. But there is every reason to believe that if the council had not overstepped so badly no reversal would have occurred, as none has occurred in a host of other cases. One council ruling that remains Administration policy is a provision allowing any industrial site, once granted a permit under the Clean Air Act, to unilaterally increase its emissions by simply filing an amendment, which takes effect unless state authorities object within seven days.

NO PARKING SATURDAY

The council has been criticized for giving corporate executives and lobbyists a form of backdoor access to the regulatory process, and suspicions of undue intimacy with business interests have lately been raised by revelations that Allan Hubbard, the council's executive director, has financial involvements with two Indiana concerns (a chemical company and a holding company for electrical utilities) that stand to be affected by the Clean Air Act. But Vice-President Quayle has defined the council's role in a way that tends to make conflict of interest, in the traditional sense, moot. "I come at it inherently with a bias that government regulation is not good," he said not long ago. He has, however, had a great deal to say about the deleterious influence of "special interests," by which he means environmental (and health and consumer) advocacy groups; together with their sympathizers in Congress and the federal bureaucracy, he says, they form an "iron triangle" that "is insidious and . . . must be broken."

The Bush Administration has not emulated the Reagan Administration in blindly opposing environmental (and health, safety, and consumer) legislation in Congress, or in ruthlessly politicizing the agencies responsible for enforcing such legislation. Time and again, though, the Administration's moderate public positions have been undermined by the Council on Competitiveness, acting in concert with the Office of Management and Budget and various White House staffers; and their actions—often technical in nature, and carried out piecemeal—have received far less publicity than the positions that preceded them. Indeed, the pattern has been consistent enough to suggest that the Administration has made a conscious decision to operate this way, so as to be widely perceived as pro-environment without alienating any of its corporate supporters, who understand that a substantial portion of the exercise is for show—that in private the Administration will reverse its stand on restrictions that it had promised in public.

Just as troubling is the possibility that the President and his key associates may actually believe they are serving American economic interests by making it easier for companies to pollute. If Dan Quayle had been Vice-President a decade ago and there had been a Council on

Competitiveness under his chairmanship, he would probably have heard from manufacturers of air-conditioners and refrigerators about the difficulties of reducing their reliance on chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, which scientists had begun to warn were playing a dangerous part in depleting the ozone layer and thus, perhaps, in warming the atmosphere. Those corporate voices would almost certainly have told Quayle that CFCs were unique and irreplaceable, and that a decision to cut down materially on their use would have devastating effects on the manufacturers, their employees, and the public.

All this was, in fact, industry gospel until about 1986, when the Du Pont Company, the world's largest producer of CFCs, quietly issued a report revealing that it had examined some alternative coolants in the late seventies and rejected them as too costly. Early in 1988, reacting to mounting pressure on the CFC issue, the Environmental Protection Agency conducted a study of CFC use, and determined that the country could achieve a fifty-per-cent reduction over a period of ten years at the seemingly manageable cost of three billion dollars. A year and a half later, this estimate was revised: for the same three-billion-dollar investment in replacement systems, the E.P.A. now said, CFCs could be eliminated altogether, and, furthermore, the country could save as much as five billion dollars in energy costs over the ten-year period.

It is the rare person who speaks of competitiveness without speaking, in almost the same breath, of Japan. One of the striking characteristics of postwar Japanese industry has been a preoccupation with minimizing waste in the use of both energy and materials. In two recent articles, the *Wall Street Journal* has cited a considerable body of evidence indicating that when a company changes its production methods in order to reduce waste products and pollutants the result is usually increased efficiency and an improved bottom line. Joel Hirschhorn, an environmental-technology consultant cited by the *Journal*, has estimated that the United States generates five times the amount of waste that Japan does for every dollar of goods sold, and twice the amount that West Germany does. One might expect, then, that from time to time a council devoted to improving American competitiveness would urge investment in (rather than resistance to) measures intended to reduce pollution and save energy. In the council's record, however, there is no known instance of such an action. Nor, despite its much criticized closeness to industry, has the council paid any noticeable attention to companies that see environmental change as an opportunity rather than a headache.

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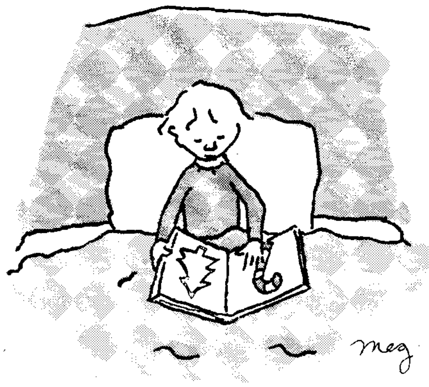
Enthusiastic

Mark Boyer grew up in Lincoln, Massachusetts, and became a tropical-fish enthusiast at age eleven, when his father installed a twenty-nine-gallon freshwater tank filled with angelfish, neon tetras, and corydoras cats in Mark's bedroom. In 1983, after graduating from college, Mark moved here, and discovered that Manhattan is a difficult place to keep tropical fish. For one thing, there aren't many good places to buy tropical fish in Manhattan, unless your enthusiasm is koi; in that case, you go down to Chinatown, where you will usually find knots of enthusiasts ogling tanks filled with them. Besides, Mark had no space for an aquarium. All the available room in his place was taken up with computer equipment—Mark is also a computer enthusiast—and with two large birdcages full of budgies, an enthusiasm that Lindsay Soutter, Mark's girlfriend, brought to their relationship, and that Mark has cheerfully adopted. In seven years together, Mark and Lindsay have also found other enthusiasms tailored to fit three and a half rooms in the Village. They got into identifying rocks for a while. Then it was insects. Once, when we ran into them in a restaurant, they were sitting with a copy of "Stain Buster's Bible" and were identifying spots on other diners' clothing. Then they started a business called Record-A-Pet International, and advertised it in the magazine *Bird Talk*. For nineteen dollars and ninety-five cents Mark would digitize your bird's voice to the tune of "Rockin' Robin," "The Blue Danube Waltz," "Happy Birthday," or "Love Me Do." Then Lindsay started making hats and jewelry, and then Mark got into silversmithing. Recently, they moved to a larger place, in Cobble Hill. Lindsay is now talking about having an aviary in the garden, and Mark is ready to rekindle his old enthusiasm for tropical fish.



The other day, Mark made a pilgrimage to World Class Aquarium, in Flatbush, which he says is the best aquarium-supply store in the five boroughs, to begin planning his new tank. His car is a 1973 BMW 3.0 CS coupe—Mark is also something of a car buff—and in the back seat were several recent numbers of *Freshwater & Marine Aquarium*. We asked Mark just what it was about tropical fish that aroused his enthusiasm. "It isn't just funky-looking fish," he said. "The main thing, as far as I'm concerned, is designing an environment for the fish. Are you familiar with the Dutch style of aquarium versus the American style of aquarium? The Dutch is a heavily planted, geographically realistic style, where the plants have equal status with the fish, whereas the American style is underwater prairie—wide-open spaces, lots of gravel—with the focus definitely on the fish. Then, of course, there's the lawn-ornament school of aquarium design—some pirate skeletons and a 'No Fishing' sign on the bottom, and maybe a cherub peeing air bubbles. The ironic confusion of air and water is a big part of that genre."

We asked if he planned to breed fish.

"For me, breeding fish is a way of keeping score," Mark said. "You have to take incredible care with everything—the pH, the water temperature, the hardness of the water. You have to duplicate the intensity and spectra of sunlight that some little Amazonian tributary gets during the three-day breeding season in September. And so on. If you get it right, your reward is baby rare fish, which you can sell if you want to—or, at least, brag about at your local aquarium club. If you get it wrong, your fish tend to die. So success and failure are pretty tangible."

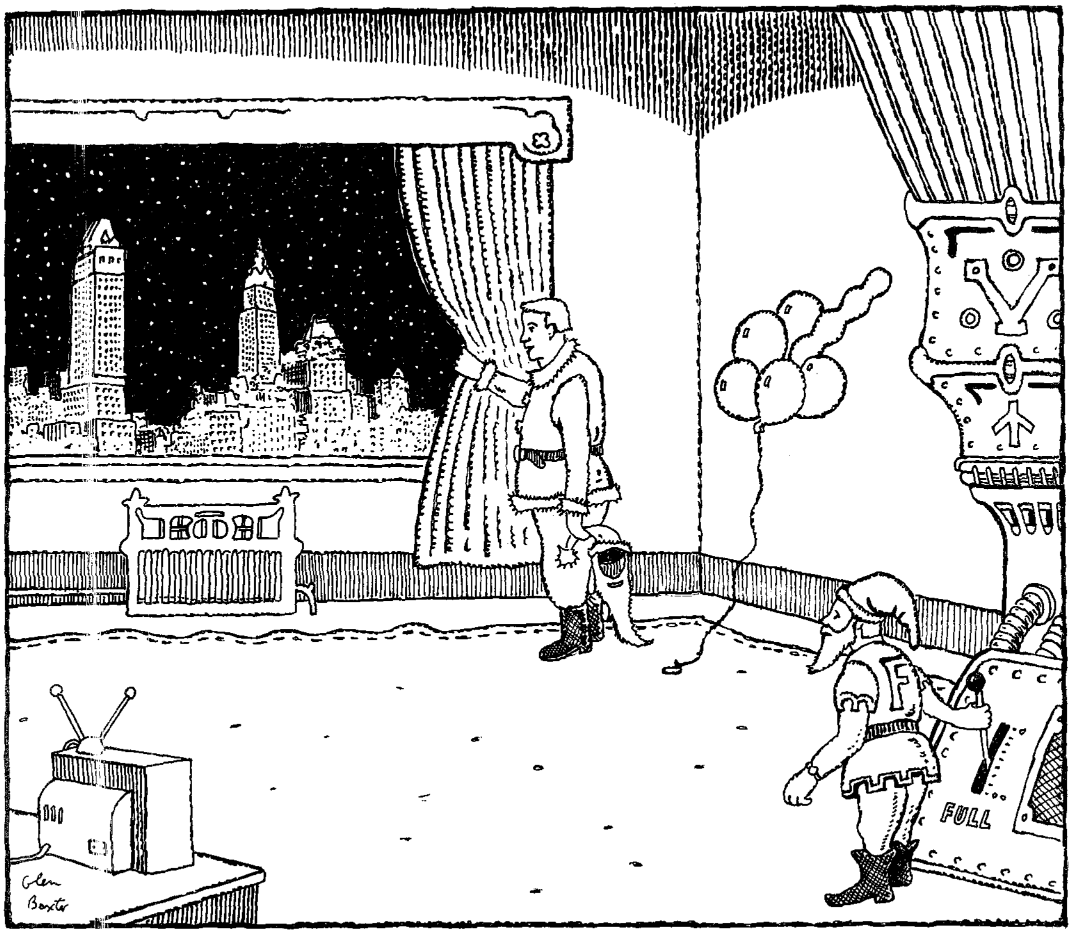
In his enthusiasm, Mark missed the Belt Parkway, so we drove over the Verrazano Bridge, made a U-turn, and drove back. As we approached Coney Island, he said, "Uh-oh. How can I drive past the New York Aquarium without going in? I wonder if I have my membership card with me." He pulled a wad of membership cards out of his wallet.

"What's the American Cheese Society?" we asked, examining a card.

"Oh, that's a group of cheese boosters I happen to belong to," Mark said.

"What's Trout Unlimited?"

"Sort of an all-purpose trout-watchdog group."



"THEY'RE STARTING TO RELAX AGAIN. SWITCH THE FESTIVE VORTEX UP TO MAXIMUM!"

• •

Mark resisted the siren song of the Aquarium and kept going east. We got off the Parkway at Flatbush Avenue, and soon came to World Class. Inside were tanks and tanks of exotic fish—leopard morays, zebra danios, red-tux platies, green swordtails, blue damsels, red-tailed cats, tomato clowns. Underneath those tanks were tanks full of feeder fish—meals for the fish above. Mark moved around rapidly, touching his forehead and murmuring "Wow! Wow! Wow!" After a while, he said, "Obviously, a great deal has occurred since I've been away from tropical fish." He pored over the array of aquarium gadgetry cramming World Class—protein skimmers, under-gravel filters, metal halide lights, digital electronic pH meters, ultraviolet sterilizers. "The whole focus of the hobby now seems to be on building authentic ecosystems," Mark said. He began snapping his fingers. "I've never seriously thought about it, but maybe I should go with a saltwater system." Marine aquariums were much more complicated than freshwater ones, because of the maintenance involved, he said, but he added, "Filtration technology has reached the point where someone like me, a mid-level hobbyist, can actually grow live coral in his living room. I could get a bunch of live rock, some anemones, maybe a tube worm. Now, that would be cool."

Another big change, Mark told us, is the advent of the discus fish. The discus is an Amazonian fish that in only a few years has become almost as much of a cult in the West as the koi is in the Orient. Mark pointed out a discus—an almost round turquoise confection with a lacy fringe of fins, blood-red eyes, and a stately demeanor. He studied it for a while. "I don't get it," he said at last, shaking his head. He came upon a small collection of books devoted to the discus, with titles like "The Discus: King of the Aquarium," written mostly by German and Dutch ichthyologists. "I'm sorry," Mark said, "but I just don't see why a discus is so much better than, say, an angelfish." He shrugged. "Call me old-fashioned."

On the ride home, Mark talked some more about fish, and then suggested that we stop at an Indian market on Atlantic Avenue. "I'm trying to make lime pickle," he said. "Every day for five weeks, you leave the limes with some spices and oil and stuff outside in the sun, so that the whole thing rots a little, and then at night you bring it in and shake it three times. Lindsay and I are totally into it."

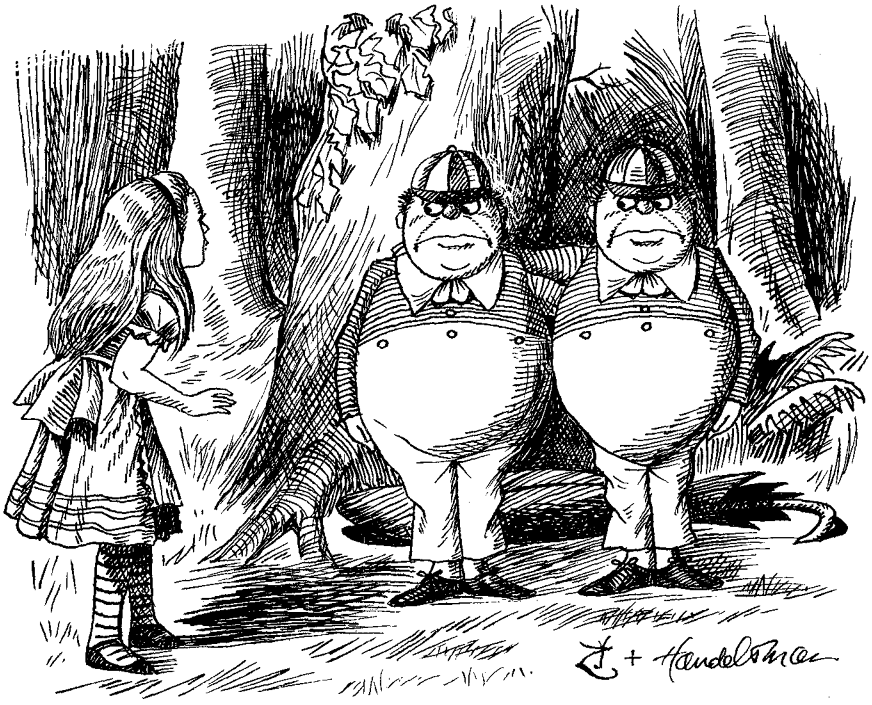
Tradition

A NEIGHBOR of ours who is a longtime resident of Manhattan and lives within walking distance of our office stops in now and then to keep us informed of what is happening in our own back yard. Our neighbor is a good talker, and sometimes we end up taking notes. (Our neighbor doesn't seem to mind.) Here are the minutes of our last meeting:

The St. Regis Hotel has been renovated, and now anyone who wants to can go and see a *shiny* St. Regis. I'm old enough to remember when Salvador Dali lived there and spent part of every day sitting in the lobby and the other public rooms. In fact, I went up to him once and introduced myself. It was a dry experience. Mr. Dali was dry—but lively enough, like an elderly musician—and the hotel of those days was dry. It was a living museum of the Belle Époque. The King Cole mural, which had been the principal feature of the bar in the old Hotel Knickerbocker, was there, and so was Dali, and so was Mabel Mercer, singing. It was a knockout combo, and gave a young visitor a sense of the real subtext of New York life.

New York has been declining, contracting, and then suddenly expanding, with little memory of its contractions, for a long time. That is, since about 1930—which is, I am surprised to find, sixty-one years ago. In this atmosphere of forgetfulness, it's nice to have some nodes in one's mind by which several things can be remembered. An unsupported memory tends to evaporate in New York. You need juxtaposition, contrast over time—that sort of thing. A building helps the process along considerably. If the right things happen to you in a good building, you can sometimes feel New York working for you. I think these moments are probably what the city needs most now. We need to feel that our city is still a viable theatre for remembering. In a good New York moment, the best things come together and coexist comfortably in a way that does not happen in cities whose history is more intrusive, palpable, intimidating.

Anyway, I rely on these nodes. As for the St. Regis, I've mentioned a Surrealist, the Belle Époque, and a supper-club entertainer, but now light has fallen on a new corner of the St. Regis in my mind. This corner belongs to a young woman named Charity Avé-Lallemant. Ms. Avé-Lallemant is not dry. She is a lush young woman, just as the hotel is now lush. It all began when I decided to visit the new, lush St. Regis. I went to the second floor, took an energetic wrong turn, and ran straight into the arms of about eight businessmen, expensively dressed and ready to sit down to a private lunch. Then I headed in another direction—the right one for meeting Charity Avé-Lallemant—and found myself standing on a new, rich Aubusson-like rug. It was so rich it took me aback. In my mind, Aubusson and Aubusson-like rugs are always faded. Standing on the new almost Aubusson with me were five young women, entrants—not just entrants but *finalists*—in the Noxzema Extraordinary Teen Contest. They were all dressed alike: blue denim skirts above the knee, red slippers with red bows, no stockings, and large white T-shirts, each with a huge royal-blue star on which the word "Noxzema" was superimposed in red. In a minute, I was talking to Charity Avé-Lallemant, who was one of the group. She is from Thomasville, Georgia, and she doesn't seem to need Noxzema or anything else. According to Noxzema's literature, she "touched the hearts of over two hundred and fifty thousand American soldiers during the Gulf War," for "after designing her own logo—an American flag in the shape of a heart—she printed two hundred and fifty thousand postcards, T-shirts, and posters" with supportive messages for the soldiers and sent them off. That is her qualification for being an extraordinary teen. (That and her seeming not to need any cosmetic help.) About the Gulf War, she told me, "I was home from debate camp and I heard about it from the first guy I went out with: we were at war."



"I beg your pardon," said Alice, "but which of you is the Democrat?"

Determination was never a St. Regis quality—at least, not obviously, although I'm sure Salvador Dali and Mabel Mercer had some. Ms. Avé-Lallemant is determined. Imagine making two hundred and fifty thousand of *anything*. Patriotism was never a St. Regis motif. Now it's right on the surface. The St. Regis of my day had a pastel quality that was almost subversive—not quite what Approved Americans were doing. Ms. Avé-Lallemant has a pastel quality that is one hundred per cent O.K. I liked her. She didn't make two hundred and fifty thousand Gulf War-related items for the purpose of not being liked, after all; she did it so more people than just her immediate circle could have access to likability. Not so different from the St. Regis renovation, I guess. I had to expand my node to include all these thoughts, but I was able to do it on the spot. I talked to Ms. Avé-Lallemant, and my St. Regis node expanded. It expanded so much, in fact, that I was able to walk into a room adjacent to the one where I met Ms. Avé-Lallemant and listen to a woman with red hair talk about the blue jar that is the

Noxzema trademark. The woman with the red hair was Anna Marie Newton, advertising manager for Noxzema. I wondered if the blue jar was a node for her.

"Do women have an attachment to the Noxzema blue jar?" I asked.

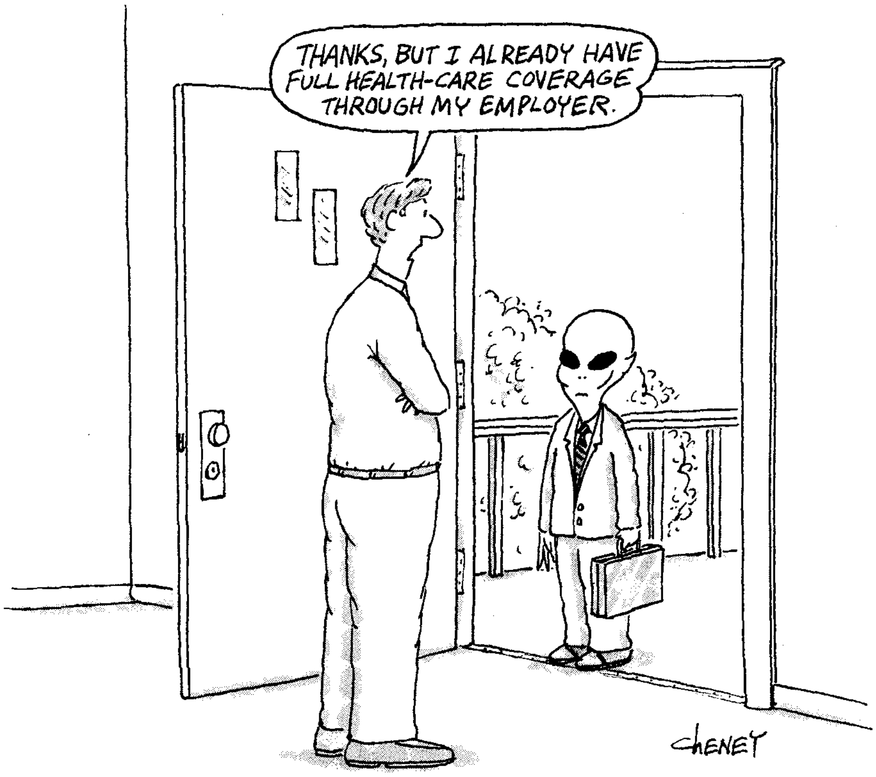
"Yes," she said. "A nostalgia less for medication and more for cleansing. Yes, a fondness for cleansing properties that goes on for life."

"Is it the very same blue jar?" I asked.

"It used to be glass—it's plastic now."

"And young women still gravitate to Noxzema?"

"Noxzema is the heartland of America. Kids get it from their mothers. If you had a daughter, you would do it instinctively. It relieves the anxiety about being less than perfect."


THANKS, BUT I ALREADY HAVE FULL HEALTH-CARE COVERAGE THROUGH MY EMPLOYER.
CHENEY

A CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE SEVENTH KIND

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Tree Windows

THINGS we learned while watching the lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree from the windows behind the cash register in the Petites department, on the fourth floor of Saks Fifth Avenue:

(1) That may have looked like a fur coat on Lucie Arnaz, but it probably wasn't. This information was provided by Sheila from Designer Coats, who had sneaked over to watch the lighting of the tree. Sheila is absolutely confident that Lucie would not wear fur, because Lucie's not that sort of person. Also, Sheila knows from coats, and that was definitely not a white mink coat.

(2) The windows in the Ladies' Lounge used to have the best view of the tree, but then the lounge was renovated and the windows were frosted. The lounge is right next to Petites, and Sally, a salesperson in Petites, is planning to open a concession there for the husbands who wait while their wives visit the lounge. Sally is thinking about providing beer and wine and copies of *Sports Illustrated.* It would be open only on Saturdays, and would have nothing to do with Christmas and possibly nothing to do with Saks' long-range corporate strategy.

(3) Last year's tree-lighter was Liza Minnelli. This year it was Lucie Arnaz. Sadie, who is in Designer Coats with Sheila, suspects that there is a pattern of famous women's daughters lighting the tree, and thinks that this is something one of the newspapers should start investigating, instead of covering all that other nonsense.

(4) A certain individual—not to mention any names, but she was a brunette wearing a chocolate leather bomber jacket, chocolate leather pants, spike-heeled pumps, sunglasses, and too much Obsession—was taking up more than her fair share of space in what happened to be a pretty tight spot, and still had the nerve to look at the tree and declare it "a big nothing."

(5) Joy Holland, Nancy Cassidy, Rose Hudelson, Vonnie Anderson, Marlene Alexander, and Marlene O'Neill, known in and around Tarzana, California, as the Ladies of the Court, have been playing tennis together for seventeen years. And it was a total accident that they got to see the lighting of the tree, since they had stopped in Petites only so that Nancy could try on a very smart-looking royal-blue Anne Klein II dinner suit with adorable chunky gold toggle buttons which was on sale, and just then they noticed the windows behind the cash register, with their full-frontal view of the tree. Quite honestly, no one in Tarzana is going to believe they got to watch the tree-lighting from such a great spot while thousands of other people in New York were out there soaking wet and being crushed to death and were barely able to see it anyway, and there *they* were, the Ladies of the Court, just minding their own business on a shopping trip from California. Plus, Rose got a darling red Tahari dress during Scott Hamilton's skating performance.

(6) Laurence Luckinbill is Lucie Arnaz's husband. Sheila disclosed this. Sadie challenged her, but Sheila referred her to ample supporting evidence, most of it in mass-circulation media. When, as part of the show, Lucie began singing, Sheila disclosed more: Lucie is a trained singer. Also, she is tall. And rich. Then Lucie began skating. This blew everyone's mind, even Sheila's; she admitted that she had not been aware that Lucie skated.

(7) Sheila used to be able to dance exactly the way the Rockefeller Center tree-lighting dancers dance, hopping and jumping and waving their arms around. The source of this information is Sheila. According to Sadie, Sheila can hardly even bend now.

DIRTY WORDS

FRUIT

IT was a nine-month incarceration. It was solitary confinement. It was dry and stupefying, full of sweets and regression—a hormonal trip to childhood, to cheap candy and bad music and copious tears. It was pregnancy, and Bette saw that she might not be reformed by the end of it; she might not turn out to be a good mother.

Already she'd gone slack with gravity, sad and self-indulgent. Her pets, a cat and a dog, sexual neuters themselves, were as fat as she. "Here," she told them again and again, presenting the open refrigerator for their perusal, "help yourselves." There was no kick to be had anywhere but in the kitchen.

She'd called her own mother after six months. "I'm pregnant," she said into the hissing reception. From far away, two time zones and a chasmal continental divide, her mother answered, "Who is this?" Between them was the white noise of futile hope, misunderstanding, and exhaustion. Bette's mother used to claim she hated pregnancy but in the end felt it worthwhile. Now she left off the last part. She gave thirty-year-old conventional wisdom as advice, which Bette, newly fluent in the rules of the game, would eagerly, incoherently defy. She would gain forty pounds instead of twenty, quit her brown-stain habits of coffee and cigarettes, possibly take up jogging. She would not drink. In La Jolla her mother sniffed. "I drank like a fish the whole time, and you and your sister turned out just fine." Bette wasn't sure.

In her family children drank early on, in the civilized tradition of Europeans yet with the exuberance of Americans, glib and intemperate. They drank early on and, when they grew up, later on—after dinner, post-dessert, into the A.M. hours. Where she came from you sampled every flavor of fun and found it good. She took the "Could *You* Be an Addict?" kind of test whenever she came across it, always failing—or was it passing?—within three humorless questions. She'd attended a single A.A. meeting, staying long enough to feel satisfactorily removed from its ranks. They were hiding vodka in Evian bottles, slipping away to bars far from home, counting hours between drunks, and limiting themselves to one a week—in short, they weren't having a good time. Bette's problem was that she merely missed drinking—it was like a hilarious friend who had moved away, like a party that had ended.

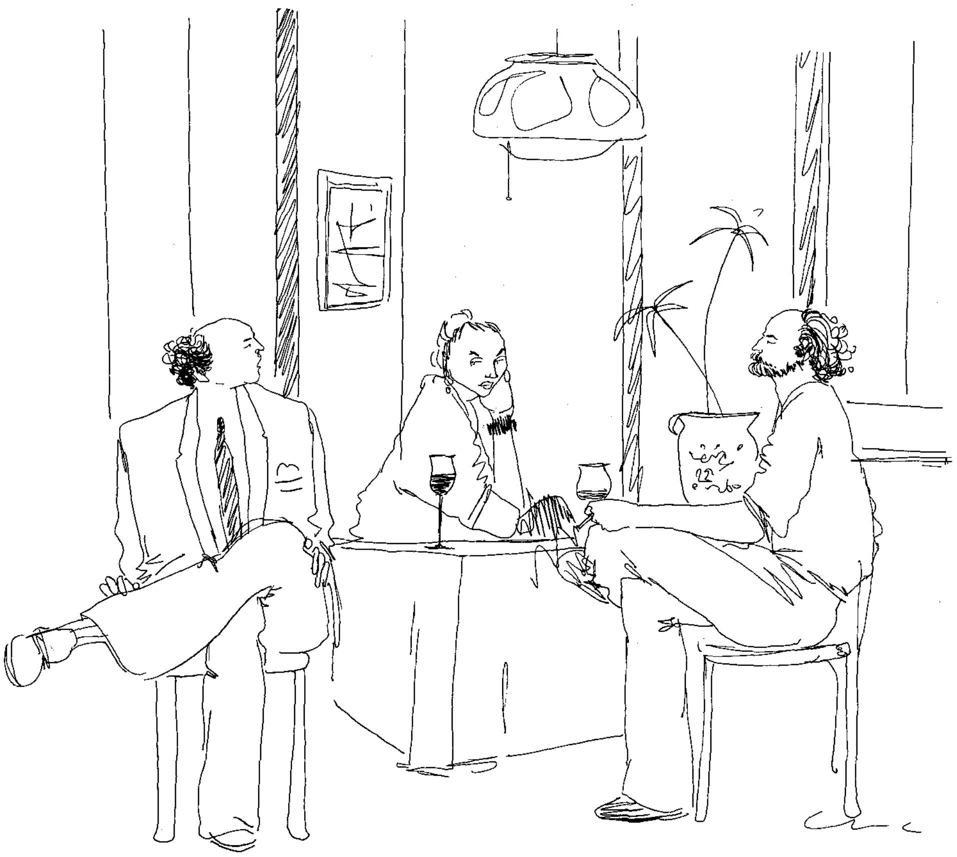
She'd told the A.A. circle—a gritty group of écru-eyed chain-smokers—that she'd grown up next to groves of orange trees. But her stories were nostalgic instead of repentant. It was in the groves that Bette learned to drink—fresh orange juice with vodka. Or with rum. Tequila from across the border. In Chicago, where citrus arrived green and hard and undersized, shiny with wax, she longed for the orange trees, driving alongside them, the rhythmic pattern with which they fractured rays of the sun.

At night she might dream of parking in the groves. A boy was beside her, the heat of the desert and the car bringing out from his freshly laundered shirt his own heat and the scent of soap flakes. They drank in the groves and played with the headlights—switched them off, then on, the trees suddenly surrounding them as in a holdup, then fleeing in the sudden dark like spirits. Sometimes irrigation fog came and settled in the groves, rank moisture that did not evaporate, a dense, pesticidal haze among the orange trees.

Her puberty came back to her. Or she went to it, eating citrus, dreaming of old friends, of the groves. Her dream landscape always had as its backdrop the branches of trees with oranges like bright baubles. When she couldn't sleep she lay resentful beside the baby's father, kicking his ankle whenever she was kicked from within. He would rouse himself enough to put a heavy, forgiving arm across her chest. He was older, willing to delay gratification. Bette liked grownups. They were generous. They had patience. In their eyes she was, and always would be, young.

It would have been sweet to have a teen-age adventure—she dreamed giddy car rides into city lights, laughing with boys she didn't know who handed her cigarettes and beers. Only when she rolled the taste in her mouth, allowed it to unfurl in her limbs, might she remember she was pregnant, and wake stricken, heart banging with worry about the baby.

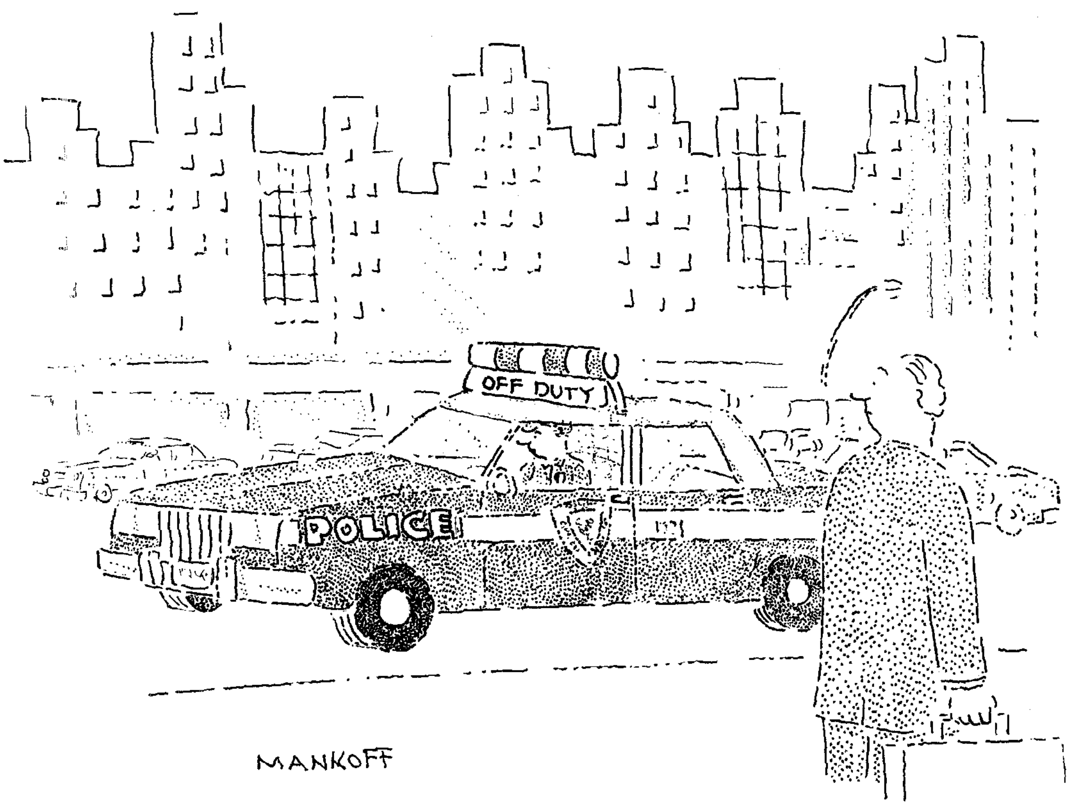
She cried progesterone-born tears, was wrenched by hysterical hic-



"I wish I could say that it wrote itself, but New York wrote it."

cups. Inside her grew a brutish boy, a leaper, a diver, an insomniac, his angular knees and his feet and skull stirring restlessly through the night like ice cubes, his image on the ultrasound screen one of a swimmer, in focus this moment, blurred by motion the next, scrotum looking bigger than his brain.

Down on the floor Bette's loyal dog wheezed with asthma but was happy to be loved suddenly so well, so weepily. Bette put her face to his and cried and cried, doomed, hugely and miserably unintoxicated.



HUSBAND

HER husband had been born in 1936 to Polish immigrants who never really learned English. They did not want to be absorbed into America; they had simply wished to leave Poland. He was Sergio Petroski, Serge to his friends. He owned a coffeehouse that had a Marxist slant: for your *latte* you paid only what you could. He was a widower. His first wife had been a political poet named Ferosa Rosario, who had been slain—the word itself was enough to unnerve Bette—for holding opinions. Sergio, by virtue of history (because he had one), intimidated Bette. Would this intimidation pass for love, she sometimes wondered. When compared with his past, her California-orange-grove life looked as naïve and sunny as a sitcom. Until she saw him naked, Sergio had made her feel immorally young and uneducated, which was precisely what she'd come to Chicago to feel. She had not been a victim; she did not grasp oppression. His breadth, his resources, the stacks of books that he could quote from and recommend, the people who called him, late at night, long-distance, from prison or deathbed—Bette, alas, had no way to link herself to this international chain of passionate intelligentsia.

Then they ended up tangled on a couch together one Saturday after closing time, after the setting of the alarms and the locking of the doors. It was your basic apolitical clinch. Sergio was stocky and gray, walrus-featured, sadly drooping in the face like Albert Einstein, fifty-three years old, most often found wearing what he called his Greek-fisherman sweater, a sewage-colored woollen garment that covered his barrel-like paunch. Bette was twenty-five, two inches taller than he, wearing clogs to exaggerate the difference, to feel some advantage. He had held her face in his hands and she could not return the direct gaze he gave her, could only close her eyes and give in to what she knew best, which was the fundamental mechanics of love. She allowed her breathing to deepen, and felt him lick her eyelids. He wore a cologne from France, sent to him by a former girlfriend—a pepperminty scent like a cool candy, like sweet schnapps—and Bette, on her clogs, leaned into it and rubbed her cheek against the crosshatched skin of his neck. Still he stared at her; she could feel his eyes on her arms and elbows, but she imagined herself hiding inside his embrace, trying to believe that this thing between them had nothing, nothing to do with age. The room around them—the display rack of hand-lettered cards, the walls of framed manifestos—floated away.

That night, before they eased awkwardly onto the bristly plaid couch Sergio kept in the back office, he brushed his teeth. It was this, and his grandfatherly nakedness, that finally gave Bette a window of confidence. With him she had only one edge, and it had to do with being born in 1964 in California in a grove of orange trees, and with having taut skin still marked by the three triangles of a long-ago tan, and breath she never bothered to freshen.

They were married in the coffeehouse, attended by employees and neighbors, poets and customers. A woman read a poem after the ceremony, though Bette could discern nothing weddinglike or well-wishing in it. There were dark birds circling carnage in Gdańsk, gutters of blood, scalpels and bombs and bones, and clouds that looked like the severed wings of doves. After the woman ended—paused and then dropped her hand, with which she had been conducting her own vibrating voice—the audience, Bette's co-workers and Sergio's friends, gave an artful and depressed appreciative grunt. Bette looked around at them and then laughed, drunk and tall. Sergio tried to smile in her direction, to be a good sport, his face glossy with nervous bravura—

he'd married such a young girl, so spontaneously, on so little evidence of worth—then applauded vigorously for the reader, who was small and unadorned and whose expression was utterly venomous. Only later did Bette learn that the poem was one by Sergio's dead wife.

Ferosa haunted Bette like a guilty conscience. Sergio seemed always involved with a project in Ferosa's memory, the details of which Bette could not keep straight. He raised money and circulated petitions—that was the general gist—but each time the funds went to different people: hostages in prison, booksellers going bankrupt, destitute protesters who picketed the *Tribune* or Oscar Mayer. Now it was Iraq and Kuwait. Pregnant, Bette had thought she might find her way in for good, forever. She thought she might appear mysterious and estimable to him, carrying a secret inside her which he could not comprehend, toward which he would have to pay an outsider's homage.

Instead, Bette found Ferosa's book of poems in Sergio's desk. They were, she understood as she read them one long, unsleeping, and unsettling night, all about the politically correct stance of not having children. *We unmake our country*, Ferosa had written of her skinny shrunk-chili-pepper-shaped homeland, *gene by gene, cell by cell.*

HOMAGE

It's not a case of forget or forgive.
Who expects either?
Something different happens.
I haven't forgotten
what you did to me or what I did.
I think about it often.
A steady contemplation
can dissolve the need for action,
as acid soil consumes bones, cloth, wood.
After a time, even the metal's gone.
Nor have I forgiven.
Forgiveness would be understanding
why those burials were so elaborate.
To the few surviving rituals
of a lost tradition, I pay homage.

—RUTH FAINLIGHT

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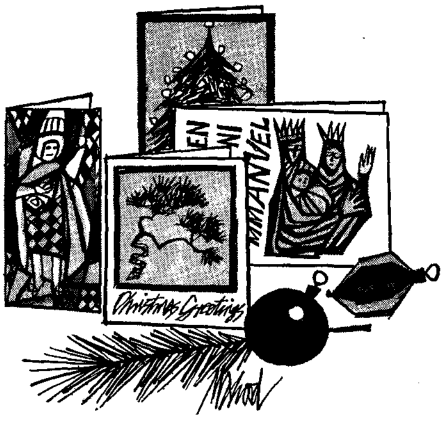
TOURIST

FOR the first three months of the pregnancy Bette was hot. For the next three cold. In Chicago, the weather was either on or off but never what you might call good. She sat on a radiator and watched the parade of service people who kept her building presentable. They all wore uniforms, brown or white or blue; they all stopped just below her window to consult their lists, then buzzed a tenant. Her clothes hung like skeletons in the closet and, unwilling to commit herself to stretch pants, support hose, or underwires, she wore the same frumpy thing every day, her own sort of uniform, once maroon, now weather-washed pink. Her libido, she was told by the OB, might run rampant, might drive Dad out the door. She maintained a lookout for such a development but remained oddly content reading erotica, never missing the real event. Her husband was a grownup; he would wait nine months, if need be. He'd done it before—been celibate for two years when he'd grown disenchanted with himself and his relationships with women. Bette thought him wise and profound, like a Buddha, like a turtle.

How could he love her? He simply did. He found in her something she could not find herself. He laughed at her when she did not mean to be funny. One day, he caught her by the wrist and held her, nearly crying, when she returned from shopping. She deposited bags of cans and eggs and salty snacks on the table, mystified by his damp eyes, horrified to think she might discover him to be weak, standing above him while he closed her skirt around his face like a handkerchief. Inside her body a boy of their making rolled and punched; outside, the father put his ear to the drama and seemed to despair. Bette tried to chart a course of action while she stroked his silky, thin hair and saw herself en route to California, pregnant behind a steering wheel. But it was an abysmal and unconnected image. Her previous life, filled with forgettable family and forgetful friends, would not secure her. This was her place, yet it depended on Sergio's steady presence. She tilted his face toward her own and squinted into it. "You're all I have," she reprimanded him.



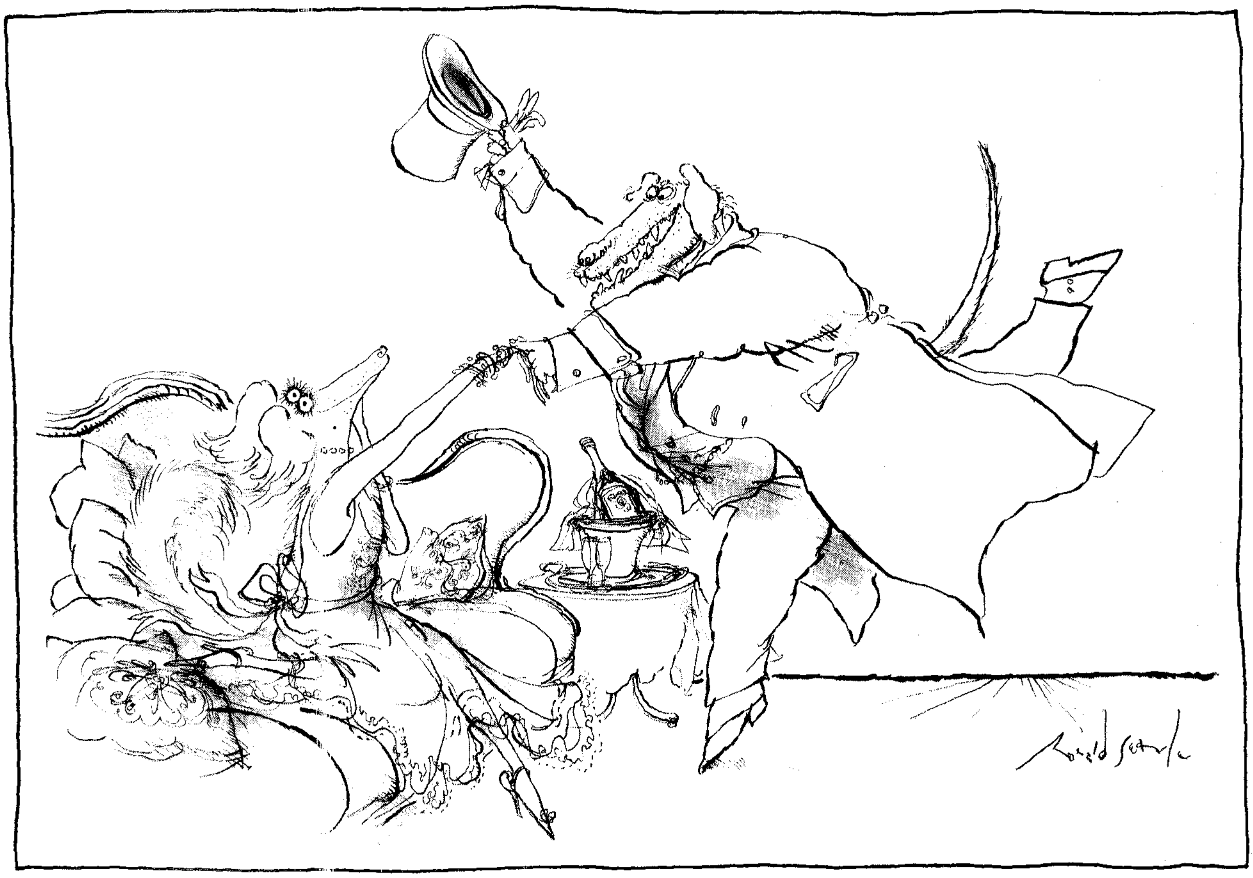
It turned out he'd been reading the newspaper; it was world events that had consumed and grieved him, as they frequently did. Later the two of them shared a pot of licorice tea and watched reruns on the tiny black-and-white TV they kept stashed in a closet, Sergio laughing and laughing at the old-fashioned jokes, hugging Bette and pounding the table with his fist.

She did not believe he meant to make her feel inadequate. "You hide what becomes you," he told her when she insisted on knowing what made her merit his ample affection. "You are sweet when you cross your arms over your big breasts to make them disappear. You are shy with them, as if they might embarrass someone. Don't you see?"

She did—his praise thrilled her; she'd always thought of herself as being a size or so too large—but she made him continue by pretending otherwise. "You love me for my bosoms?"

Though he was smart about her, he mostly played into her hands. "'Bosoms,'" he said, laughing. "I was making a metaphor. You don't know those things about yourself which are appealing. That's what I like."

Still, it was tiresome to be mistaken for his daughter, to have people, especially women and especially now, in Bette's seventh month, stare at the two



CROSSED PATHS

Lassie Meets the Hound of the Baskervilles

• •

of them with disgust. Sergio's mother, who lived in a nursing home three blocks from their apartment, puffed her mouth when Bette came to visit, as if she might spit a tooth onto Bette's lap. Before moving to the home, before Sergio's father's death, before the oxygen machine they'd attached her to, Matska had been vaguely senile. Her apartment always smelled of gas, though Sergio's parents claimed over and over to have had the problem checked by their super. Matska would smile and invite Bette into her seedy kitchen, humbly introducing herself and her husband, never sure who the girl was. Now, purely oxygenated, she knew.

"Child!" she hissed, and Bette did not know whether it was she being addressed or the one in her womb. Matska's English, still a foreign language to her, was full of inconsistencies. She seemed to use "child" as a term not unlike "whore" or "witch." Sergio was protected from her fury by her evident belief that Bette had tricked him into marriage (via sex or incantation, Bette supposed, which, strictly speaking, might not be so far from the truth) and still held him under a spell.

"Most mothers *want* to be grandparents," Bette whined. "She ought to be *thrilled* with me." Sergio agreed, seeming to think the arrival of the baby, this grandson (a genealogy Bette didn't like to consider for long), would soften things among them all.

However, Matska was also a drinker. It had been a useful common denominator, because it was a role Bette inhabited the way she did that of a lover—with assurance. Before Matska went into the home, she and Bette used to sit for comfortable hours in front of an open window, wearing coats, drinking cooking sherry, Matska relating the story of her son's life, his tender childhood. Bette continued to visit the nursing home, hoping one day to discover Matska returned to her former hospitality, with a deck of cards—she loved honeymoon bridge—or a friendly bottle of cheap sherry resting on her bed table.

Sergio did not drink, and he was the only friend Bette had made in Chicago with whom she didn't immediately associate alcohol. Choosing him, she told herself when she worried, showed her willingness to turn her back on frivolity.

At the coffeehouse she had always gotten high with Benjamin. But now that she was pregnant, Benjamin had little to say to her. He was Sergio's oldest friend, a business partner by default, a former this, that, and the other—tired, cynical, gay. What possible use did gay men have for pregnant women? So seeded, so Kansas, so fat. She went to visit one day, dressed not in the artful black clothing she'd learned to wear in her former life but in something floral and baggy.

"Yikes, a romper!" Benjamin said when he greeted her, squinting his eyes as if against glare, laughing.

Bette knocked over a pyramid of Melitta filter baskets when she rounded a corner. Squatting among the plastic cones, she tried not to cry.

"How's things?" she sniffed, hungry for the outer world, collusion, jokes.

"Swell," Benjamin said, making the

word as ripe as she, holding himself away from her, as if her condition were transmittable or he might be embarrassed by association. And then he asked, as everyone always asked, always in a great, solicitous, sorry tone: "How are you feeling?"

She smiled thinly and told some version of the truth. "There's only three states of mind for a pregnant woman: suicidal, homicidal, and placid." You woke up and there you were, propped on one pointy corner of the triangle or another.

Ordinarily they might smoke pot together in the back room. Benjamin kept a stash and pipe in a file drawer for the regulars, for civilized, chummy rainy-day intimacies on the plaid couch. How Bette missed her real life. Now the back room reeked of underarm sweat and rotted orange peels.

Benjamin turned to face her suddenly, inspired by something, his eyes unaccountably eager. "Let me see you," he said. He was staring at what had once been her waist. "I've never seen a naked pregnant woman. What do you say—gimme a look-see?"

Bette felt herself redden, horrified at exposing herself. "Go get knocked up yourself if you want to see a freak show." Spinning to leave, she crashed into an adding machine, sending it only as far as the seat of a roll-away chair. Benjamin sighed in disappointment, still mesmerized by her midsection.

Other people stared, too. A dark and craven man followed her around Dominick's, circling aisles so that he continued to approach her head on, staring intently at her abdomen as if she might be about to burst with prophecy. Something maniacal in his eyes kept her from saying a word. In the presence of all the gaping world, Bette remained mute, ashamed of the large evidence of copulation she carried with her every day. It was worse than a scarlet letter; it forced her to waddle, to buy prunes and healthful cereal that looked and tasted like little haystacks, to require carryout service. In the checkout line she managed to overturn a display of horoscopes, tiny rolled tubes that spilled to the floor like a pack of cigarettes. She was too ungainly to retrieve them from under the magazine stand.

Knocking things over was not confined to public spaces. At home pens jumped from tabletops, papers from shelves. "Could you pick that up?" she would ask the cat. "Oh, never mind. Forget it." From tummy to knee she was a map of bruises, a geography of lumpy flesh and tender veins. Sergio had to kneel at her feet to roll her stockings up her ankles. Counters and the newly tight space of their small bathroom conspired against her. She was a large belly, wobbling through the world like an ugly tourist, clod-dish, and with a loud, guffawing laugh.

BABY

MEMORY of life before maternity leave had dried up and blown away. She stood on a vast desert like a Russian nesting doll, shiny and round, and solitary but for the little clone hidden inside.

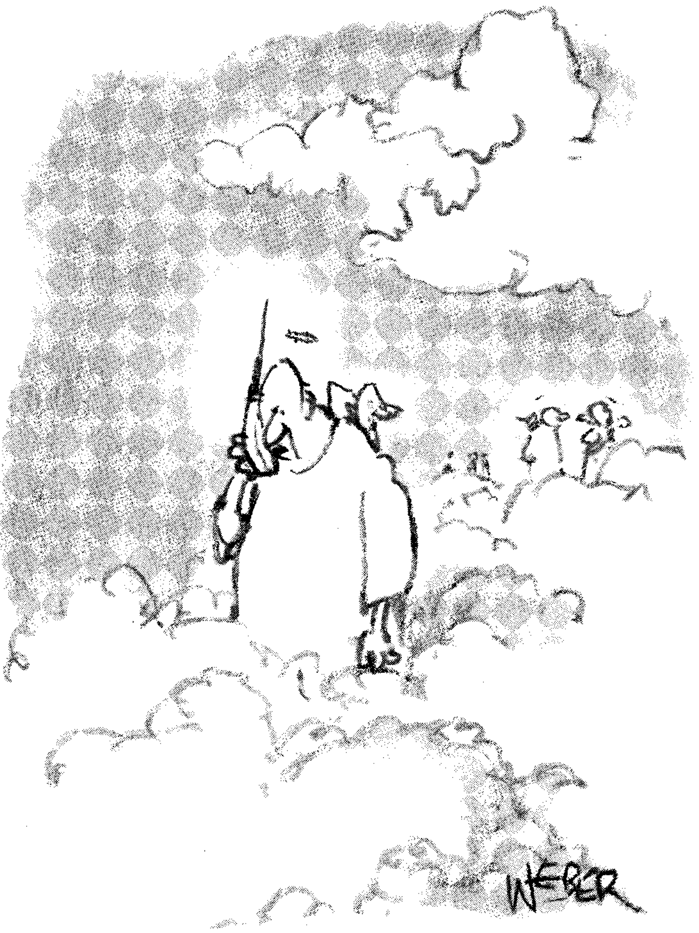
Her condition, by now, was inescapable, the baby a conundrum like a ship in a bottle. In the park, small children, infants, the mere sight of strollers were terrifying. Parents tried to converse with her. She scurried to dog territory, where others, childless, knelt with plastic bags and paper towels, screeched the names they might otherwise have bestowed on offspring: Maurice, Chloe, Otis.

"Help," she sometimes said at the grocery store, unable to reach the desired brand of rye crackers on a top shelf. She hoped someone might hear and understand, as if she were short and old like Matska.

Sergio decided Bette was to be spoiled and petted. He fawned, he cooked leafy greens, he brought her grotesque bouquets of blood-red roses. Somewhere he found a bottle of wine containing no alcohol, a promising, deeply colored Merlot. Bette sipped, then gulped, but it tasted precisely like what it was: 12.8 per cent absent. Sergio shrugged sheepishly, then lay behind her and kneaded her spongy skin while she sniffed his sleeve for the adult odors he'd picked up on the El—diesel exhaust and mentholated cigarette smoke.

"Only two more months," he said carelessly at one point. He was preparing his future nostalgia for these despicable days. She had never felt so isolated—like an astronaut floating through space. *Reel me in!* she might gesture in her bloated white suit, in a panic, but on board the ship her co-pilot would wave serenely, thinking she was pointing out the idiotic beauty of Pluto.

Denied wine, she substituted chocolate. She'd lost her talent for discrimination; an Oreo was as good as Godiva. The days wore on, not in their usual parade of ups and downs, clowns and cops, but precisely identical to one another. She rolled from



"When you testify, Marty, tell the truth and let the lawyers go to hell."

bed each morning horrified by how many more times she would have to do it. She walked sluggishly, creating new, deeper-sourced noises in the wood floor, and then sprawled at the kitchen table. She weighed more than Sergio now. Shoes, the one form of clothing that had never betrayed her—had never been outgrown before worn out—no longer fit. She popped from everything—overblown dough, a rhino in her own home.

Sleep was her only recourse, the deeper the better. Each afternoon she prepared a nest. She pulled the phone cord from the wall, shut the blinds, turned the metal radiator up high, stripped naked, and then positioned pillows between her knees and under her neck and over her exposed ear. She drifted as if in the ocean, thinking of weightlessness, of sunshine, of being without a body. She put her hand to her hard belly and felt herself as suspended as her child, dreamy and liquid, without consciousness or conscience.

PRIORITY
US MAIL
OUT OF TOWN
LOCAL
BOOTH

"We do our best to give people the most courteous and attentive treatment possible, especially during the holiday rush."

• •

WAR

MEANWHILE the Middle East roiled. Sergio organized one of what were known as Events at the coffeehouse. Antiwar poetry and music. Bette decided against attending. Wasn't it arrogant, after all, to turn up pregnant at a time like this? Besides, she could not interest herself in the war. It was abominable, but she was busy. (She couldn't even think of the word "abominable" without changing it to "abdominal.") She signed petitions but had no idea what they signified. Clever peace slogans went over her head. In the evenings, when Sergio flipped on the news (the television now lived on the kitchen counter), Bette retreated to the bedroom and browsed through baby catalogues. She heard the word "Scud" and still thought of boys who weren't cool enough.

FELLOWSHIP

THE first day of their Lamaze birth class, each couple was asked to reveal the length of their marriage, their occupations, and whether this was a first child. In the beginning Bette enjoyed her and Sergio's relative bizarreness. Other Moms and Coaches spent their days at real-estate offices or car dealerships or architectural firms. One Coach, obviously unwillingly associated with the whole project, stubbornly announced himself unemployed. His wife, an enormous red-faced woman who had fallen into her chair as if ready to put down roots there, socked him on the arm. "He does phone solicitation," she explained. "In between jobs."

The group grew to tolerate one another, and Bette found herself looking forward to their meetings. She began wishing Sergio were as clunky as the other husbands, as young and as easily embarrassed by the instructor's frankness. Instead, the lingo rolled right off his tongue: cervix, placenta, lanugo. He read the books, and none of what he read made him squirm. It occurred to Bette that the rest of her life would be abnormal, that Sergio would train their boy to hug dolls and to cry and to wear—without masculine resentment—lumpy Ecuadoran sweaters.

"Remind me why I wanted a baby?" she asked Sergio, over the telephone. Only over the phone could she concentrate on conversation. In person she was too distracted; her body got in her way—the swollen ankles, the popped navel.

"Was it your ticking biological clock?" he teased, squeaking in his chair at the café. "Or maybe mine?" He giggled, and Bette was tempted to join him, but often these days she found herself frighteningly close to turning Sergio's jokes into a tragic version of her life. There was music in the background at the café, loud guitars and drums, manhole covers clashing together. "Benjamin says maybe our marriage was going wrong." Sergio went on playing. "Actually, I can't remember why we got with child. Can't you?"

The truth was—there was truth—she *did* remember. Every now and then a wash of emotion came over Bette so strongly that she had to sit down and cover her eyes for fear of falling. *This* was the reason—the scientific principle governing the teardrop-shaped female body: inertia or vertigo or something not yet discovered and named. It had to do with her tender breasts, with TV commercials about puppies, with the childhood taste of hot oatmeal and raisins, with Sergio's sleeping face under her wakeful, skeptic's scrutiny, with her part in the dreadful, thrilling innocence of new life.

DOG

THREE flights of stairs became too many in her eighth month. And the dog had never learned to heel, raised as he had been in lawn-filled, permissive California. Sergio suggested tentatively that he drop the dog each morning at Matska's nursing home, where they encouraged pets and warm, fuzzy feelings, and let the dog make use of the yard the residents themselves hadn't set foot in for the last three months. Sergio spoke out of regard for Bette's precarious physical state, the ice on the back steps, the fact that the dog, which weighed eighty pounds, could be considered dangerous in this weather to someone in her condition.

And it was. Bette recalled a day not more than a week before when she'd slid, clinging with one hand to the frozen pipe that served as bannister, the other hand resting over her baby, the dog, a flight below, sledding comically on his side, legs flailing but catching at nothing.

"O.K.," she said, tearfully. Pregnancy had made her stupid with commitment to the animal, and she choked up over his absence. Sergio dropped off and picked up the dog the way one would a child in day care. "It's great—it's so yuppie," Sergio would say when he got home. Bette squatted—she seemed to do nothing but squat these days—to pull tiny clots of pressed snow from between the dog's toes. The clots were like hailstones, round and solid as pebbles from nestling all day in his paws. Meanwhile, his tongue would work at her hands, reminding her gently though persistently that he did not like his paws touched. It was inconceivable to her that she would love anything more than she did the dog.

The nursing home's director, ambassador to the outside world, called one afternoon, three days before the baby was due, to say that the dog was acting . . . well, funny.

"Funny ha-ha?" Bette asked. "Funny strange?"

After a long pause, the director chuckled uncertainly. "Your dog is digging our fence up. You must come fetch him."

Bette looked down and discovered herself to be sitting in a warm puddle. "Yes!" she cried. "Broken water! Yes!"

She set the receiver in its cradle. A lulling voice was carrying on patiently from far away. "We wouldn't want to be forced to let him escape. We wouldn't want to have to actually give chase. . . ."

Before phoning Sergio, Bette stood to survey the damage. Then, while on her feet, she decided to have a drink.

KALULU

Scarf of moon fallen, fist
of ash, so white she's indiscreetly
virginal, the snow hare has turned her coat
too fast, and now on a swath of beat-
down grass is camped in her

absolutely non-camouflaging
briar house. Brambles make a bird-
cage over her. Pretentious, hysteric, rabbit
turned Alice in a wonderland of warm,
her dire need to have what

change is customary spelt
out on her brown pelt. Half an hour
later she's still there, stuck, a Day-Glo
stopwatch hand, one hundred yards from
the lonely barn, where a

central radiating sunlit
patch bleaches a raft of old upended
latrines, as if beauty might come of anything.
In a hot country where it scarcely
snows, the moon isn't a

portrait of a man, poor hare,
but of your African sister, Kalulu,
ears folded back, an embryo in a blur of white,
who hasn't learned that the light
shining on her doesn't shine

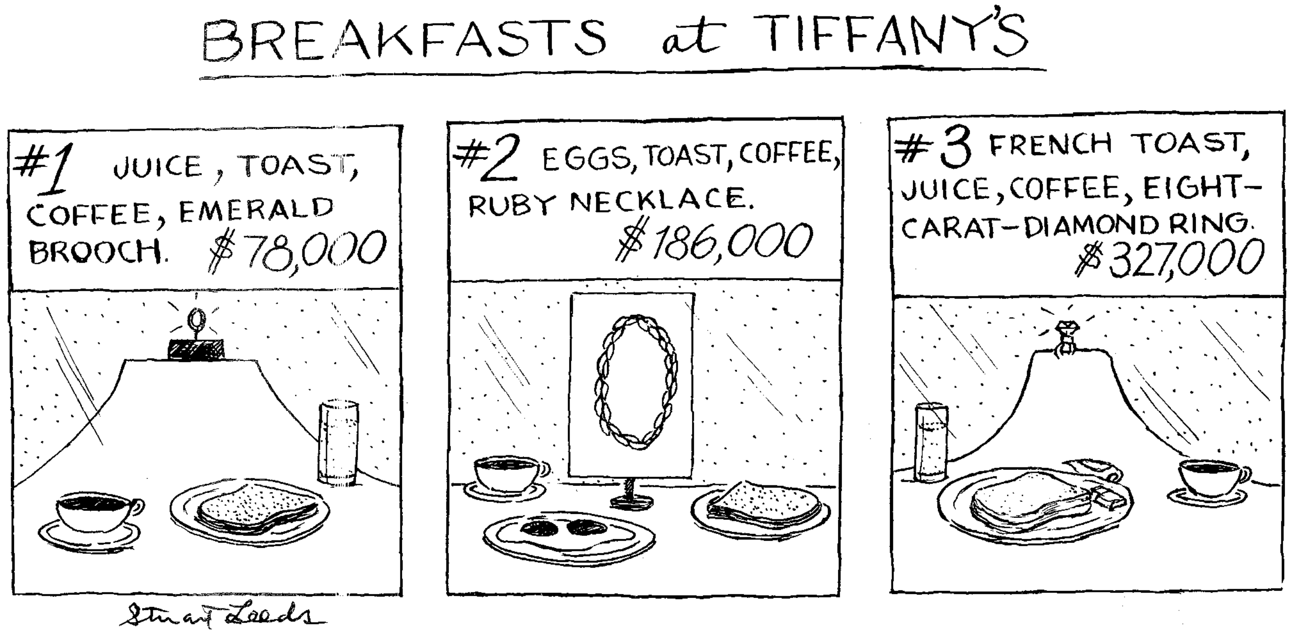
from her. Bright herald in
the shadow of storm, shy from haste
of any moving breath, casualty of expectation—
could winter, having tried so hard
to get it right, have given up

its ghostly sixes for
a season, foregone its endless crystal
calculations? And why the latrines? Why the
barn not fallen but no trace of house?
And why, for heaven's sake,

in this crayoned-in field,
shrugging with fir, with milkweed,
with mud that has no business not being iced
over, do we find ourselves praying,
if we do, both to and for you?

—CYNTHIA ZARIN

• •


BREAKFASTS at TIFFANY'S
#1 JUICE, TOAST, COFFEE, EMERALD BROOCH. $78,000
#2 EGGS, TOAST, COFFEE, RUBY NECKLACE. $186,000
#3 FRENCH TOAST, JUICE, COFFEE, EIGHT-CARAT-DIAMOND RING. $327,000
Stuart Leeds

It seemed the indubitably correct move, now that her child was about to be washed from her body.

Grownup Chivas in hand—she'd never drunk Scotch before—she dialled the coffeehouse. Her sweatpants were soaked. Inside her, curious movement began, more articulate, less muffled. All lines were busy at the shop, so she waited, sipping distractedly on her drink, wondering if what she felt was contractions. If so, they weren't as bad as everyone made them out to be. When after five or six minutes all lines were still busy, Bette asked an operator to cut in.

"I'm the owner's wife," she told the woman, who had no interest in the nature of the emergency. "And I've gone into labor."

"Uh-huh," the operator said nasally. When she returned to Bette she informed her that no one was on any of the lines; everything was off the hook.

At this, Bette gulped down the remainder of the Scotch and phoned her doctor, whose nurse told her to take a cab to the hospital.

Before leaving, she brushed her teeth.

MOTHERHOOD

WOOZILY, she gave birth. On the way to the hospital, she'd had to lecture her cabdriver. He'd made the mistake of expressing his disappointment at his wife's getting a C-section. His accent annoyed Bette, that and the fact that he'd taken a longer route than necessary to Northwestern. Bette swooned on the stiff plastic back seat, feet straddling the floor hump, forehead propped on the back of the front seat. This, she concluded, was it. Hardly breathing, she could smell her cabbie's aftershave, his aging American sedan, the grotesque odors of former fares. "My wife, she did not try hard enough," he said.

"Oh, give me a break!" Bette shouted at the floor, when she could take in enough oxygen to say anything. From rib cage to pelvis she was taut as a basketball.

"Is true!" the driver swore. "She only tried one day for the natural birth."

"As in twenty-four hours?" Bette lifted her head long enough to see him nod vigorously. "I feel sorry for her," she said.

"Yes," he said. "It's very bad she couldn't do it the natural way."

"No," Bette said, struggling to speak now. "I feel sorry she's still your wife." But he couldn't possibly understand her. A barge had come pushing through her, a seizure, a pain like a fired missile.

Sergio made it to the hospital in time to cut the baby's cord. The phones had been off the hook at the coffeehouse because the war had ended. Benjamin and Sergio were toasting the possibility of peace and hadn't wanted to be interrupted.

"My turn to take care of him," Sergio now shouted happily to the room full of green-clothed adoring women. Bette heard one woman say to another, "It's so unusual to have a grandfather in delivery." The obstetrician dashed out the door, due at another birth party down the hall.

From her room she phoned her mother. For a truce-like time they discussed labor while Bette watched Sergio through the nursery glass, walking up and down with little Ed, named for his real grandfathers, both of them, two men long gone from two worlds equally lost. Bette was teary considering it. From La Jolla her mother told her she had begun writing poetry.

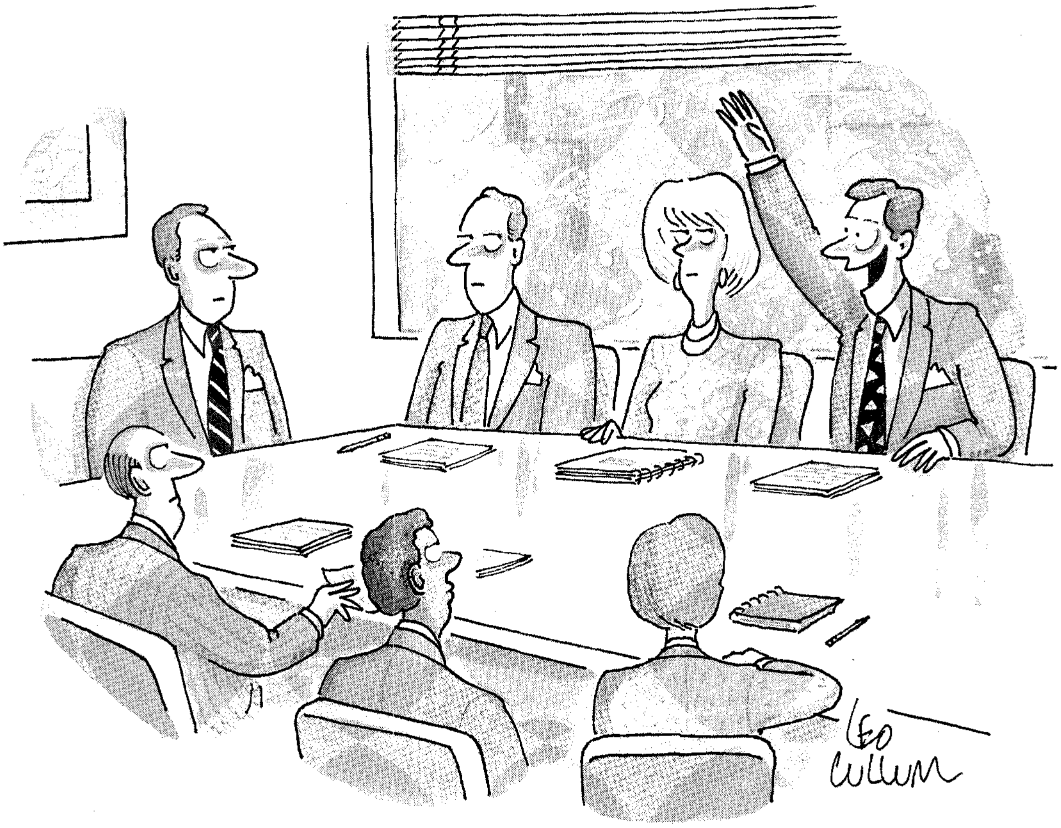
"Oh, please," Bette said in exasperation. "I already have one poet too many in my life."

"Listen, here's a line about all these California grandmas. I'm working with Mother Goose here. You ready? Quote, 'There was an old woman who lived in a shoe. She had so many children she *did* know what to do,' unquote. Whaddaya think? I'm taking a class at the branch library."

Bette said, "I better go lactate."

SEX

TOWARD her pets she held recalled affection, and this is what she now felt toward Sergio as well: habitual love, her response to his caresses like a segment of a routine—this, then that. Not unlike grinding coffee beans in a stupor each morning. For his part, Sergio's affection extended to Eddie via Bette; he still loved her best. But between Bette and Eddie, small red-fisted thing, there was some-



"*When I was in business school, at the first big snowfall we'd all go out and make a snowman.*"

• •

thing brand-new. He was a high she knew she didn't deserve: his eager face at her breast every few hours, his confused cross-eyed looks and wrinkled forehead that seemed to pose to her a severe and simple question: Who are you?

Sergio fetched his mother, who came to the apartment bearing a roast to celebrate the baby's birth and the end of the Gulf War offensive. Sitting in the refrigerator, dripping blood onto a milk carton, the clear-wrapped lump of meat looked for all the world like a placenta. Bette gagged down dinner anyway—her mother-in-law was trying to make reparation. At the stove Matska had mistaken one knob for another: a burner on top glowed red all afternoon while, in the cold oven, the meat grew gray, remained raw. They sliced it and fried it before eating it, but still it was unbearably rare.

"He looks like his father," Matska told them, of Eddie. Bette agreed; but, then, all newborns looked like old men to her. Matska held him without supporting his wobbly head, allowing it to loll sideways and back. "You're good, you're good," she cooed into his slow, opaque eyes. Bette drank champagne, one sparkling glass after another, idly subtracting ages until she realized that she was closer in age to her son than she was to her husband, and that her husband was closer in age to his mother than to her.

The baby did many less than pleasant things but they didn't bother Bette. Sergio, however, with his bald head, the hairs in his ears, the saggy paunch of flesh, an odor he couldn't quite disguise—these things began to disgust her, though she spent the day changing diapers full of tar and wiping down the yellow chin of her son. Eddie's skin was remarkably similar to Sergio's, dry as paper and baggy as a pachyderm's. She grew to dread Sergio's touch, to turn her mouth away from his minty kisses. He closed his eyes and groped, like the baby, for the favors of her flesh. She began to wish him dead, to imagine the car accident or heart attack that might take him. In his absence she was ecstatic, autonomous once more, propelling the baby through the neighborhood in his stroller, dragging the dog behind, grinning at strangers, and chatting. But at Sergio's arrival home each evening, Bette might dissolve into tears, complain about her sore breasts and the baby's interminable, choking cry.

Sergio would hold the boy and walk from room to room, listening to Bette without looking at her. She watched him and heard herself as if from a corner of the ceiling. Who was this shrew inside her? She seemed to be set on driving her husband from her life. How much would he take, she wondered. At what point would his adult disposition give way to boyish hurt? Each time, just before she went too far, Bette ran to Sergio and held him tight—she was sorry, so sorry, and he, as ever, forgave.

They could resume relations, her obstetrician informed her. "You really think so?" Bette wanted to ask.

She'd been a prisoner of war; she'd come back metamorphosed, a veteran, politicized. In celebration she drank beer while little Eddie nursed, both of them warm and a little drunk. Now that he was out and fine—above average in all ways, on all scales, ninety-nine out of a hundred—alcohol became Bette's friend again. Everything appeared through the lens of her successful campaign. Ferosa was a beloved but deposed demagogue; Matska a psychological sissy. And Sergio? An anachronism. His son would be blond. And the baby already preferred his mother: Bette. In the back of her mind sat the dirty words "divorce" and "departure," like loot in a secret safe-deposit box. She was healthy, vigorous, young: a pretty American girl with her own car, her body snapped back, pre-pregnant and firm, virgin. The country stretched to either side of her, festooned with yellow ribbons, offering no resistance. She could drive anywhere, and ever after live happily, happily, happily.

—Antonya Nelson

PERSONAL HISTORY

AN IDEAL STATE

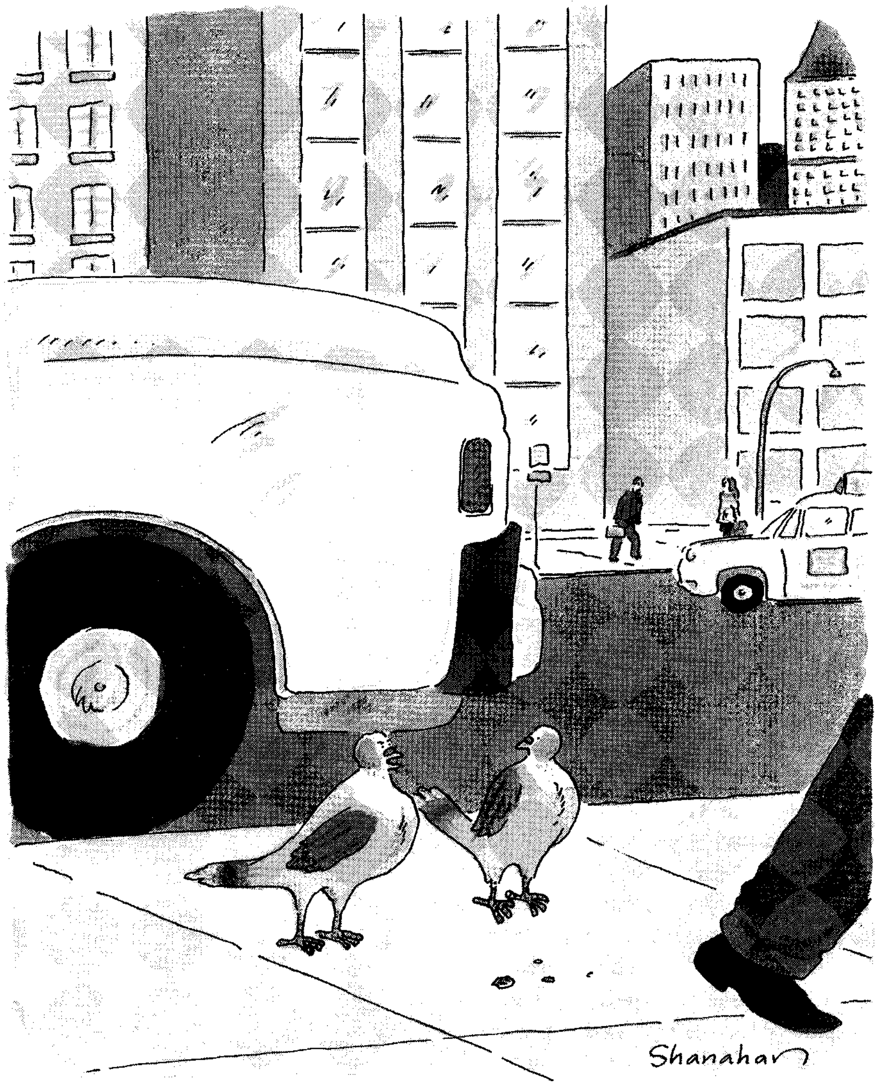
ONE steamy August day in 1982, there arrived at my house, in northern Florida, the following letter, which bore stamps from the Republic of Malawi, in central Africa:

> DEAR MISS ARMSTRONG [sic]:
>
> Please excuse the brief note, which is entirely unofficial. I thought however that you would wish to know that the Appointments Committee has agreed to offer you a lectureship as from October 1st. This will mainly involve beginning the teaching of Latin here—you are likely to have about half-a-dozen students in Year I, who will have taken Latin for four years in school or seminary. . . . I am afraid the salaries here do not compare to those in America, but you will find the cost of living relatively cheap. Considerable interest was also expressed in your athletic prowess, and it was hoped you might help the College coach in this area. I don't suppose you also play a musical instrument—we are in great need of a bassoonist. . . .

The letter, which was from the Dean of Humanities at the University of Malawi, while unexpected, was not entirely unsolicited. In the spring of that year, I had decided to live in Africa, and had systematically set about writing to virtually every English-speaking institution of any kind on the continent with an offer of my professional services. It was an unjustifiably optimistic enterprise. An assessment of my marketable skills indicated teaching as the only employment for which I could conceivably be considered fit, yet my areas of specialization were not those usually deemed necessary to the intellectual well-being of developing non-Western nations: I had a degree from Florida State University in classics, with an emphasis on archaic Greek language and literature, and another from Oxford, in philosophy and theology. However, at the time of these overtures I was tutoring the Florida State football team in English and humanities, and I felt I could reasonably claim skills applicable to teaching English as a foreign language; consequently, I had overemphasized my current employment within the context of my professional life.

By late spring, I had received a number of encouraging, if untenable, responses. The University of Nairobi had offered to consider me for a teaching post in its Literature Department, conditional on my arranging a comparable position in the United States for a member of its faculty, and the University of Zambia had offered me a similar appointment if I could find outside funds to pay my own salary. After this unpromising start, there had followed a long silence. I was beginning to abandon all hope of going to Africa when the letter from the Dean of Humanities arrived. By the time the subsequent flurry of correspondence and phone calls had come to an end, some weeks later, and the nature of my duties had been more precisely defined, I had signed a two-year contract—not only to teach Latin but, more improbably, to establish a Department of Classics at the university. I was to be paid a salary of 4,600 kwacha per annum (a kwacha at that time being equivalent to .9093 U.S. dollars), with an additional annual allowance of K. 1,573, awarded because I was an "expatriate" and presumably given to more expensive habits than my Malawian colleagues. I was also to be allocated university housing.

My domestic preparations consisted of assembling those items that I had been informed by the college secretary would not be readily available in Malawi, such as linen, towels, cooking utensils, china, clothing ("hard-wearing" cottons were recommended), and toiletries—in short, everything necessary for daily life—in addition to whatever books and academic tools I might need. My academic preparations were more demanding. Classics as a scholarly discipline refers to the study



"I flew South once. Couldn't buy a decent soft pretzel."

of the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome as they are manifested in Greek and Roman literature and language, art, architecture, history, philosophy, religions, and mythology. This spectacular variety is for the student one of the discipline's great attractions, but for the administrator it has nightmarish implications. Under the terms of my contract, I was to teach Latin, Greek, and classical studies and to develop "from scratch" a four-year undergraduate classics program—from scratch apparently meaning, in this case, without benefit of material resources. I was told that the university library owned some six hundred books on literary, philosophical, and historical subjects that could broadly be considered classical. There were no slides or visual materials of any kind, and no relevant texts were available in the university bookstore (evidently the only place in the country where one might expect to come by this kind of literature). Since it was clearly impossible for me to take an actual library with me, I settled for sheaves of lists—lists of books in print, lists of academic periodicals, lists of companies specializing in slides and films of classical subjects, lists of classical organizations around the world—from which I hoped to be able to construct a kind of mail-order department in situ.

Latin has been taught for many years in mission schools throughout Africa, and the universities of Lagos, Ibadan, and Zimbabwe have Classics Departments; nonetheless, I was keenly aware that introducing a subject generally regarded as archetypically Western to a Third World country would be perceived by many people as inappropriate. Among the papers sent to me by the university offices, however, was a booklet entitled "Classical Studies in Malawi," written by Professor Robert Ogilvie, a distinguished Roman historian from the University of St. Andrews, in Scotland. Professor Ogilvie had been invited to Malawi in the summer of 1979 to assess both the desirability and the feasibility of establishing a Classics Department at the university. He had responded favorably, citing what he felt to be four compelling factors: (a) that "structurally, Latin is a language of great clarity, and knowledge of it can help linguistic understanding not only of derivative languages . . . but of any language"; (b) that the study of classics "requires high standards of accuracy and application," and that the "precision of thought and expression" it fosters can be transferred, "as has been seen throughout history," to other fields, such as law, business, government, and administration; (c) that "the social, political, and economic aspects of the ancient world, precisely because they have both similarities and dissimilarities with the African scene, are of great educational value as a comparison"; and (d) that the modern world has inherited much of its political and cultural legacy from Greece and Rome, and it is "of contemporary relevance" to study the sources of this legacy. In short, Professor Ogilvie's reasons for believing that the study of classics would be of value to Malawi were identical to those invariably given for its value to the West.

In the introduction to the booklet was a curious sentence, which I noted at the time with only mild interest. "The original inspiration for the promotion of Classical Studies was given by His Excellency the Life President, Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda," Professor Ogilvie had written. I attributed this acknowledgment to his desire to conform to a tradition (or necessity) of crediting any innovation at all to the head of state. This was Africa, after all; doubtless such homage derived from ancient tribal custom.

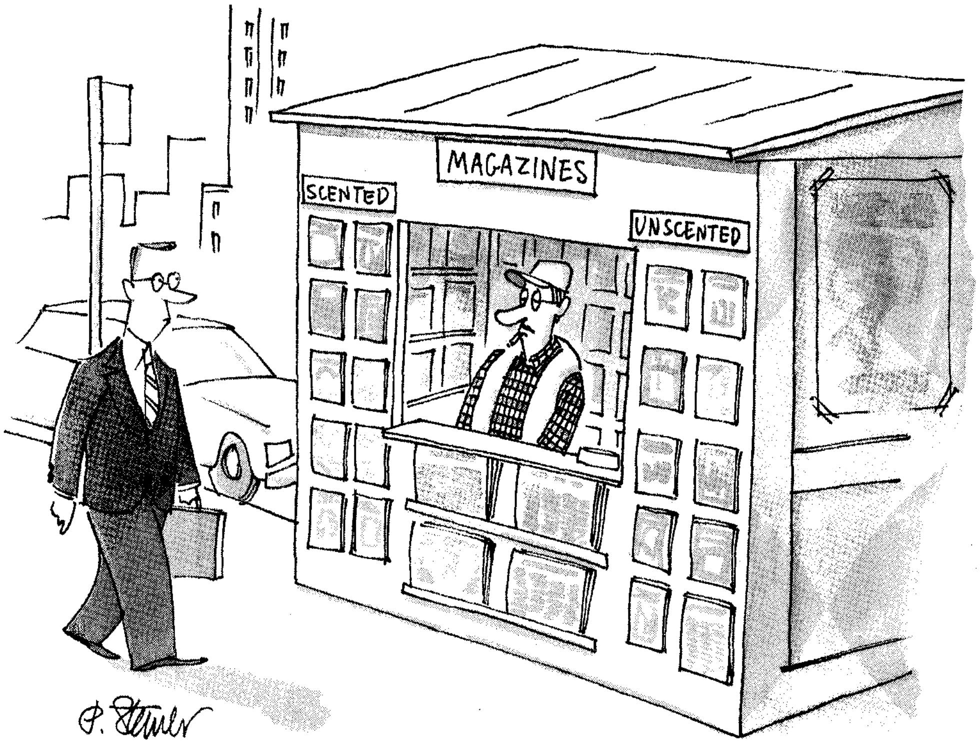
THE Republic of Malawi is represented in atlases as a green and blue sliver of land and lake; it comprises some forty-five thousand square miles, with the lake accounting for about twenty per cent of the total. Situated in a southern section of the East African Rift Valley, Malawi is bordered by Tanzania to the north, Zambia to the west, and Mozambique, which curls around its eastern and southern boundaries. Its population is just over nine million (including approximately a million refugees from Mozambique), and, though unimpressive in terms of numbers, is enormous relative to its landmass: with an average of two hundred and forty-six people per square mile, the country has one of the highest population densities in Africa. When the Dean's letter arrived, I knew little more about Malawi than that it lay somewhat closer to the east coast of the continent than to the west. John Gunther's "Inside Africa," the only pertinent book I had at hand, gave a tantalizing description of the country, which he referred to by its old British-colonial name of Nyasaland:

> This is a beautiful little country—mountainous, vividly green, fertile, heavily populated. . . . "Nyasa" means "broad water," and the country is called "the Land of the Lake." It clings to Lake Nyasa like a long green caterpillar attached to a blue leaf. . . . Readers of Laurens van der Post's sensitive "Venture to the Interior" do not need to be told of the romantic, if somber, beauty and mysteriousness of the Nyasa landscape. If scenery were for sale, Nyasaland would be rich. (Actually, although fertile, the country is so densely populated that it is poor—people often call it the "Cinderella colony.")

Eve Olitsky

The University of Malawi was established in October of 1964, three months after the nation gained its independence from Britain, and is today composed of four colleges, with campuses in different regions of the country: the Bunda College of Agriculture, the Kamuzu College of Nursing, the Malawi Polytechnic, and, in the old capital of Zomba, Chancellor College, the campus devoted to the arts and sciences. At the time of my appointment, Chancellor College had just under a thousand students—or roughly half the total student population of the university—and an academic and administrative staff of a hundred and thirty. The college offers honors degrees (i.e., degrees for course work of five years' duration) in the usual arts and science disciplines, and also in law, public administration, home economics, education, and Chichewa language and literature—Chichewa being a Bantu language that is, together with English, the official language of Malawi. Admission to the university is competitive, based on examinations modelled on the British O-levels. In Malawi, I was to discover, the British model is followed in all things; for example, the Malawian academic schedule, alone in sub-Saharan Africa, is determined not by the cycle of dry and rainy seasons which shapes the life-rhythm of the continent but by the scheduling of the British Michaelmas, Hilary, and Trinity terms.

In colonial days, according to an antiquated travel book I came across, Zomba was considered the most beautiful capital in the British Empire. In 1975, however, the capital of Malawi was moved north, to Lilongwe, a spanking-new town in the central province. Zomba, set in the foothills and slopes of the dramatic Zomba plateau, offered no room for expansion, and, in any case, it was President Banda's desire to promote development of the central province. Parliament and the High Court, however, are still situated in Zomba, safely in the vicinity of the high-walled, garden-encircled Presidential palace.



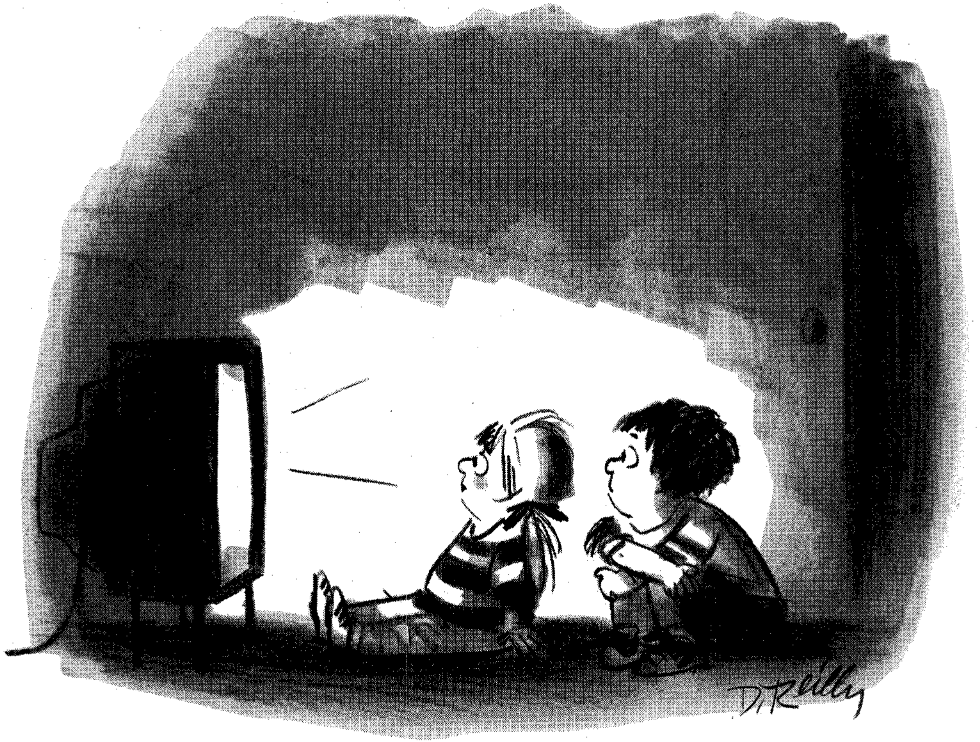
With most of the government offices and many major companies shifted to Lilongwe, the old capital has become a quiet and uneventful settlement, in size and population somewhere between a large village and a true town. The whitewashed colonial houses, with their long verandas, remain, and at the town's center, set in the lush and picturesquely unkempt Botanical Gardens, stands the gently decaying mansion that once housed the colonial governor. Cinder-block buildings—including a bank, a new post office, the Kandodo supermarket, and a few other shops—line both sides of the main road, which runs southwest to Blantyre, the nation's commercial capital. Off one side of this thoroughfare, on dusty, cratered streets, are arcaded Indian shops, painted turquoise or muddy yellow; a little blue-and-white mosque; and the open market. On the other side of the road, under the regard of the great plateau, is the undulating golf course of the Zomba Gymkhana Club, its fairways lined with white trumpet lilies, dark patches of elephant leaf, and groves of tall golden and feathery green bamboo. From various points along the roads that meander past the better colonial houses up into the plateau foothills, one sees Zomba as a configuration of silver, red, and green metal roofs pressed close by much green foliage and, according to the season, by the lavender blossoms of jacarandas or the red-gold of flame trees.

The plateau itself is a tabular massif rising nearly seven thousand feet out of the Shiré Highlands. It is the stuff of legend: a syenitic citadel of more than fifty square miles, encompassing streams and cascades, primeval forest, acres of pine, golden grasslands, and a maple-tree-bordered pond, so that a walker on its heights will wander through an improbable juxtaposition of landscapes—ancient Africa, the Black Forest, East African savanna, a Canadian trout pond. Monkeys and baboons haunt the plateau's trees, and there are leopards in the deeper forest reaches. On a clear day, one can see the hills of Mozambique from the plateau peaks; at sunset, the Shiré River flashes silver on the flatland below.

Like the plateau terrain, Zomba is a montage of disparate worlds. The majority of its Malawians, who spend their days maintaining small, subsistence-level agricultural plots, live in mud-walled, thatch-roofed huts, clustered on the edge of town and in the valleys of the plateau and its contiguous hills, or in the stark servants' quarters that still back most residences. In the small and dusty commercial district, just beyond the open market, Indian merchants have built garish houses, as close to the source of their income as the geography of the town allows. Because of the limit placed by the government on the percentage of profits that can be sent abroad, the merchants are forced to spend their money on the few luxuries available in Malawi, or on those covertly imported from South Africa—flashy cars, expensive clothes and jewelry for their beautiful, closely guarded women, and up-to-the-minute video, camera, and stereo equipment.

Upon my arrival in Zomba, I was given a small house of whitewashed brick, in a neighborhood of university houses about a mile from the college. A scarlet bougainvillea cascaded over one end of the *khonde*, or small front porch, and a jacaranda stood just beyond the front steps. Avocado, grapefruit, papaya, and frangipani trees grew in the garden, which was screened from the road by a towering grass fence. The floors of the house were of polished cement, and an outdoor wood stove heated the water.

The Chancellor campus was an attractive, airy complex of flat-roofed red-brick buildings linked by covered walkways. From the classrooms one looked out across roughly landscaped grounds to the foothills of the plateau. At a party held shortly after my arrival, I had the opportunity of meeting a



"And so, kids, if you don't find this awesome new game under the tree you've really got to ask yourselves what you're doing there."

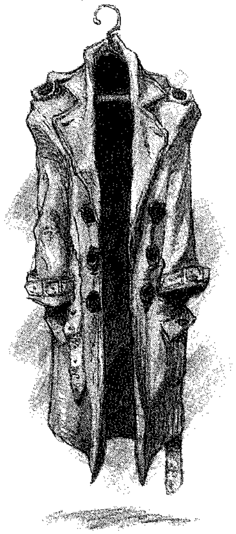
• •

number of my colleagues, one of whom was performing a series of slow somersaults around the floor while holding a beer bottle in one hand. When I was reintroduced to him some days later, he seemed not to recall that we had previously met. Members of the faculty fell into one of two categories—Malawian or "expate." The former were graduates of the university who had obtained higher degrees abroad—typically, in Canada, Britain, or the United States. For Malawians, the educational road to a faculty position is relentlessly long: most candidates have gone to local, often inadequately equipped primary schools before advancing, through competitive exams, to secondary school and the university, and family financial problems usually force them to sit out a semester, or an entire year, at home. University graduates who choose an academic career are frequently required to teach at the university for a couple of years in a capacity akin to that of a graduate assistant in this country before they can begin their advanced studies abroad, and a similar hiatus is often necessary between attainment of the master's degree and a doctorate. Thus, by the time a Malawian has finally won his (or, less commonly, her) way to a permanent faculty position he is typically several years older than his Western counterpart.

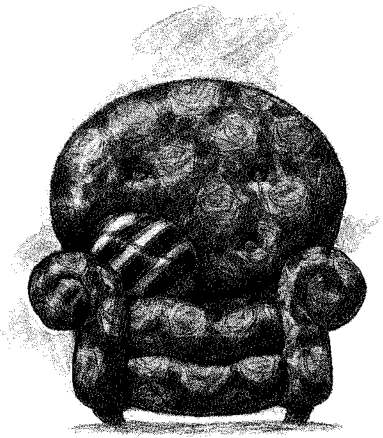
Expatriate employees, most of them British, make up about a quarter of the faculty. The terms "European" and "expatriate" are used interchangeably in Malawi, and refer exclusively to white people, whether from Europe or not—in spite of the fact that not all expatriates living in Malawi are white (many come from India, for example, or other parts of Africa). Numbering only some sixty-five hundred, they are elsewhere in the country involved in commerce, banking, foreign service, and missionary or development programs; in Zomba, the great majority are associated with the university. Besides the "expatriate allowance," the university's foreign employees receive a leave-taking gratuity on completion of their contract amounting to between fifteen and twenty-five per cent of the total remuneration paid over the years. The reason for this policy is the recognition that overseas employees may have financial obligations back home which cannot be met by local wages.

Salary issues aside, the economic disparity between a European and a Malawian professional is compounded by the latter's inescapable obligations to his family. These kinship responsibilities are often taken by Europeans as indicative of the more humane and caring nature of traditional African culture, but in practice they can foster attitudes as vicious and self-regarding as any in the West. Once a village man or woman has "made good"—which is to say, is salaried—he or she will be expected to meet whatever financial demands are made by a needy or greedy relative, no matter how tangential the lives of the two parties may have been up to that point. Relatives descend expecting to be housed and fed; they may come from many miles away for loans or gifts. Anyone who denies such requests will be looked on askance by the rest of the family, and his life will be made extremely unpleasant. The new salary is bled away as the obligations become too many to meet. Debts are incurred, and the smart gardens of the university houses are turned into fields of manioc and maize—for only a European can afford the luxury of growing flowers. While I was there, a Malawian who had a salaried job outside the university or the government was lucky to earn three hundred and sixty kwacha per annum; a domestic servant working as a cook received approximately fifty kwacha a month; a gardener perhaps thirty kwacha a month less than that.

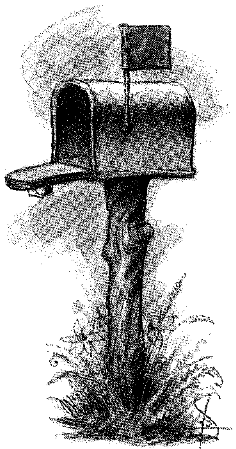
The reaction to my arrival on the campus was one of wary welcome. Contrary to my expectations, it was not my Malawian colleagues who evinced the most skepticism about my assignment but the British. Their attitude, it soon became clear, arose not from a concern for the integrity of Malawian culture, which might be threatened by the importation of a traditionally Western subject, but from a cultural possessiveness of their own (manifested at the national level by the elevation of Homer above all other poets at the Albert Memorial in London). But from Malawians and expatriates alike I sensed a defensiveness that seemed at times to be almost personal. I found it striking, for example, that time after time, in making



In these pockets you could find several mislaid dollars, some tissues and a rather linty throat lozenge.



Beneath these cushions lies a comb, some old pet toys and lots and lots of change. All of it yours for the taking.



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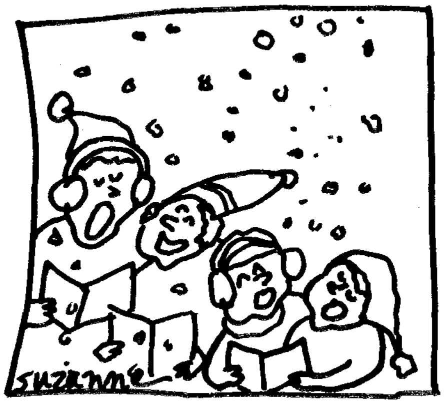
a new acquaintance, I received the same cryptic greeting: "So you're the person who has come here to make us a real university." I began to feel that there was a dimension to my work of which I was unaware. These impressions were soon substantiated, and the explanation, when it came, was very simple: although I had come to Malawi with all the pretensions and apprehensions of a cultural missionary, someone else had already been there, long before me.

It is unlikely that the principal newspaper of any other nation has ever borne a banner headline conveying a Presidential fiat that "ALL EDUCATED PEOPLE MUST LEARN LATIN"—a pronouncement then explicated by thoughtful editorials. It is probably also safe to say that there are few other countries whose leader was accustomed to broadcast radio speeches to his people using Ciceronian rhetoric; a collection of the selected speeches of Cicero translated into English was, I later learned, one of President Banda's favorite books, and he often read it at breakfast. Similarly, there are probably few Classics Departments in the world's universities which owe their existence to the personal mandate of an absolute dictator.

The President's strong feelings on the subject of things classical apparently received their most unambiguous expression on the occasion of the university's commencement ceremony in the fall of 1982, shortly before my arrival. Oblivious of the dry-season sun blazing down on the college courtyard, the President, in his capacity as chancellor of the university, held his audience captive for over an hour while delivering the customary address; but instead of offering his congratulations to the young men and women on their graduation and reflecting and advising them on their prospects, he had, in the presence of the assembled parents and university faculty, launched with no ado into the issue foremost on his mind. "How can you people call yourselves a real university if you don't have a Department of Classics?" he demanded. Just as a university without a Classics Department was not really a university, Banda held, so no one, whatever his academic discipline, was truly educated if he did not know Latin and Greek. It was impossible to understand the mind of the West—"our conquerors"—without knowledge of the West's psychological and historical heritage. Africans would forever be alienated from the mainstream, and thus powerless, unless they cultivated this essential background knowledge.

The President's attitude toward classics had been known long before he made this address, but the university authorities had been slow to fulfill his wishes. Professor Ogilvie's recommendation that a modest program be started, preferably by someone with a background in "Classics, Philosophy, and Theology," had been put to one side. Some months before the commencement, however, the President's predilection had surfaced again, causing the university administrators anxiously to reëxamine the slighted Ogilvie report. It was at this moment that my letter of application appeared on the Dean of Humanities' desk—like (in his words) "manna from Heaven." My appointment, then, was more political than academic. But the matter did not end there. By degrees, I came to realize that the classical influence in Malawi was so pervasive as to account for the very structure of the country and for the President's perception of himself as its leader.

To appreciate how this is so, it is necessary to know something of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda's pre-Presidential life. According to Philip Short's excellent biography, "Banda," the President was born in 1898 (although he claims to be still in his eighties), in a tiny Chewa village near Kasungu, in central Nyasaland. Banda's first contact with a European school was at the age of seven, and soon thereafter he was converted to Christianity, taking the commemorative name of one John Hastings, a Scottish Presbyterian missionary. By 1915, Banda had determined to achieve the best education available, and to this end he set out alone on a four-hundred-mile journey on foot to South Africa. Hard years followed, during which Banda worked as a janitor, a pumping-boy in a mine, and a miner while pursuing his studies at night school. A job as a sweeper in a hospital in Salisbury had made him aware of the appallingly inadequate medical care available to Africans, and reinforced an incipient interest in becoming a doctor.



In 1922, Banda became a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, a denomination that stresses the right of Africans to be accountable for their own affairs. For a while, he was employed by the A.M.E. as a Sunday-school teacher, and in 1924, at the age of twenty-five, he received a church scholarship to attend the A.M.E.'s Wilberforce Institute, in Xenia, Ohio. After completing the institute's four-year course in three years, he continued his studies—financed by a precarious sequence of jobs, minor scholarships, and donations—at Indiana University and, later, the University of Chicago, where he majored in history and political science. He graduated with the degree of bachelor of philosophy in 1931, and subsequently entered Meharry Medical College, in Nashville, from which he received his M.D. five years later. In order to be allowed to practice in Nyasaland, however, Banda required British medical certification, and this he obtained from Edinburgh University, in 1941. That year, he was also ordained an elder of the Church of Scotland, to which he had transferred the allegiance he retains to this day.

From the beginning, Banda's plan had been to return to work in his own country, but this long-held desire was repeatedly thwarted. He lost an appointment to a missionary station in Livingstonia, in the north of Nyasaland, after the resident nurses wrote to the mission headquarters, in Edinburgh, to say that they would not work under an African doctor. An application for employment in Nyasaland's colonial government resulted in the offer of a job as a medical officer, but with the stipulation that he not fraternize with white doctors. Frustrated by these receptions, Banda suspended plans for returning to Nyasaland, and set up a practice in Liverpool and later, as a National Health Service doctor, in Harlesden, a lower-middle-class sub-

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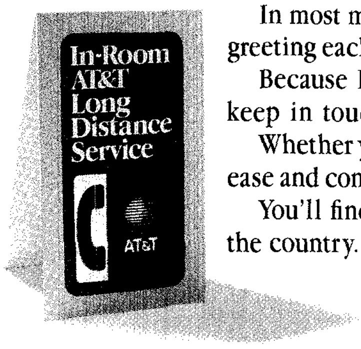

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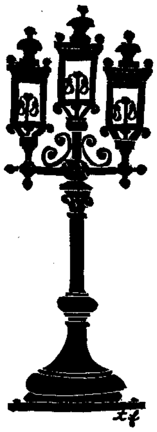
urb of London. He continued to practice medicine in exile until his return to Nyasaland in 1958, as the Ngwazi, or savior, of his people.

Banda's years in London brought him into the African nationalist movement, through a network of acquaintances that he cultivated with African students and nationalist leaders in exile. In particular, these contacts reawakened his interest in the political fate of his own country, where events were becoming tumultuous. At issue was the proposed federation by the British government of its three Central African colonies—Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Banda soon became a liaison between the Nyasaland National Congress Party—which was spearheading the country's independence movement—and the British Colonial Office, and also a public spokesman against the evils of federation. In 1952, he assisted a small delegation that had been sent from Nyasaland to present a petition against federation to the Queen (who, as it turned out, would not see them). In spite of increasingly desperate tactics by the National Congress Party, the Colonial Office steamrolled ahead, and on August 1, 1953, against bitter and widespread local opposition, Nyasaland was formally incorporated into the Central African Federation. Dissent continued unabated, however, and Banda was approached both by Congress Party members and by rival factions to return to Nyasaland and lend his weight in person to their common cause. At length, Banda, who was by this time sixty years old and had been in self-imposed exile for some forty years, demanded and was given the Congress Party's presidency, and committed himself to returning home.

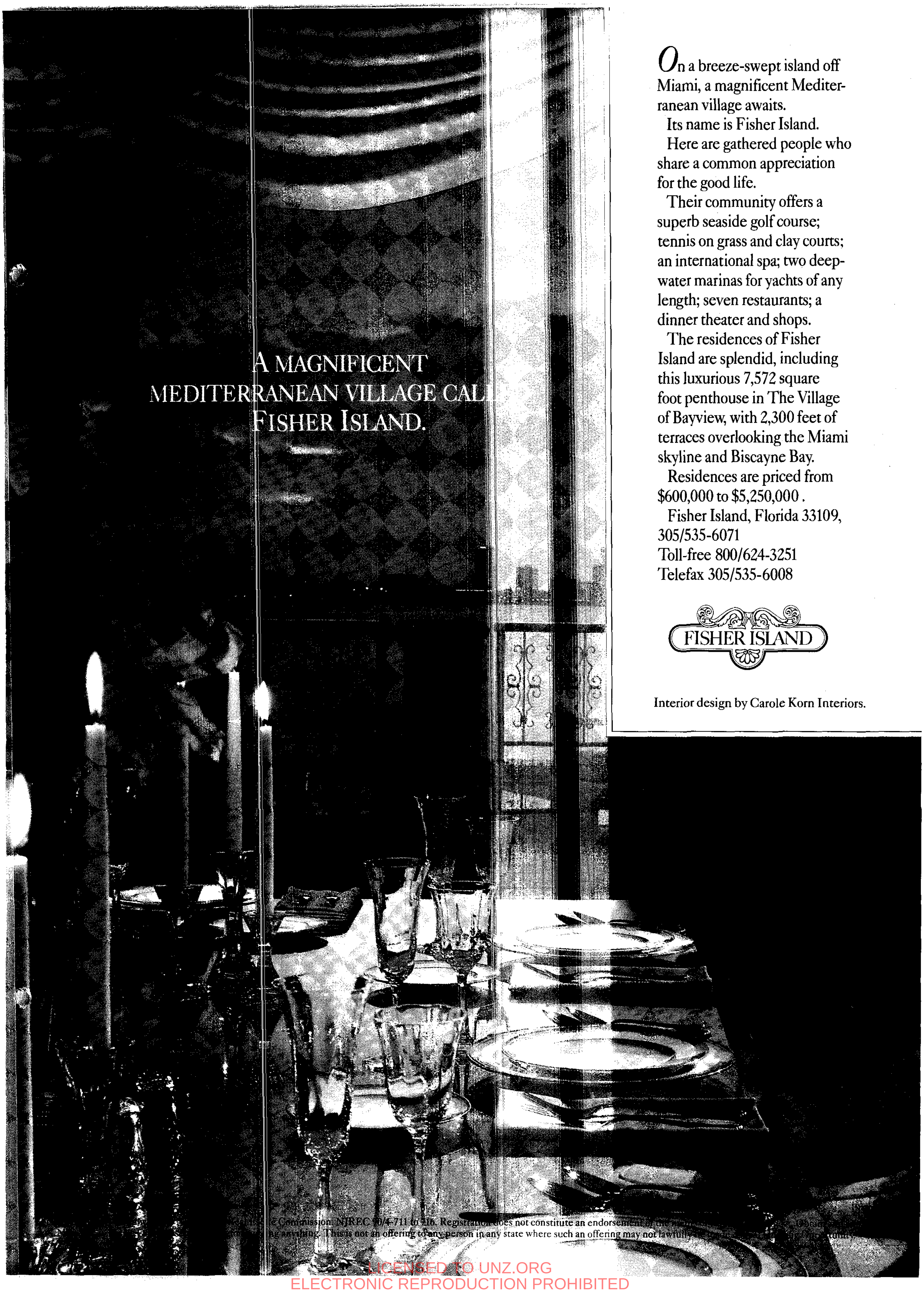


On July 6, 1958, Banda was welcomed at Chileka Airport, outside Blantyre, by a crowd of a size and enthusiasm he could not have conceived of in his most farfetched dreams. From his first appearance at the airport, he took charge of the nationalist movement and orchestrated its political agitation, which continued over the next four years. Gradually, and with many turns of fortune, the nationalists succeeded in wearing down the British government's resistance. On February 1, 1963, Banda was sworn into office as Nyasaland's first, democratically elected prime minister, and on July 6, 1964, Malawi's independence was formally declared.

But the end of the national struggle did not mark the end of Banda's quest for power. His non-democratic tendencies had been worrisomely evident since his assumption of office, when he installed, without consultation, personally favored members of the Congress Party in key Cabinet positions. Increasingly, the pretense that Malawi was an orthodox democracy shredded away: the Congress Party became the nation's only legal political party; Banda's rivals were hounded out of office or the country, or died in suspect circumstances; and in 1971 the Ngwazi was officially sworn in as the President for Life of Malawi.

It was perhaps Banda's ability not only to straddle but to master two cultures which accounted in great part for his initial undeniably immense charismatic appeal. In person, he is a small, unprepossessing figure, standing barely five feet tall. Nature's curtailment of fair proportion, however, is compensated for by sartorial elegance, and Banda retains the habit he formed while practicing medicine in England of dressing like an English gentleman, in Savile Row suits and an ever-present homburg. An ostentatious fly whisk is the only African element of his invariable costume. In speech and in outlook as well as in dress, he appears to owe more to his years in the United States and Britain than to the land of his birth. On his triumphant return to Nyasaland, he addressed the worshipful crowds trailing him in English, having forgotten his native Chichewa. Whether or not Banda is, these decades later, still ignorant of his mother tongue, he has never been known to use it in public: his many public speeches are translated by an interpreter who stands at his side.

The facts of Banda's early life indicate a personality of great single-mindedness, discipline, and quiet but adamantine self-confidence. Although his political consciousness was shaped to some extent by his fellow African nationalists, he is incontestably a man of his own school, and in the sphere



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of African politics something of an eccentric. Neither in the turbulent latter days of the Federation nor in his all-mighty capacity as President for Life has he ever been slow to assert his opinions or make the shockingly unorthodox statements for which he is famous. At the height of the African nationalist movement, for example, and less than two years after Malawi gained its independence, Banda had this to say to his parliament concerning the recently formed Organization of African Unity:

> I am not going just to listen to some fools of the O.A.U. who do not know what they are talking about. No! No! I am not. And even at the United Nations itself, some of the things, resolutions, passed there are just childish. Childish! . . . Other Africans, other Prime Ministers, or even other Presidents follow whatever is said by their friends without thinking for themselves simply because they are ignorant. . . . That is the trouble in Africa today—too many ignorant people who do not know anything about history and if they do know anything about it they do not know how to interpret and apply it. That is why Africa is in a mess. . . . This is the tragedy of Africa: too many ignorant people in a position of power and responsibility.

He expressed similar sentiments at the 1965 conference of African heads of state and prime ministers in Accra, Ghana—a conference assembled to determine a concerted policy toward Southern Rhodesia's impending unilateral declaration of independence. The majority of the summit members accepted a proposal that member states of the O.A.U. who were also members of the British Commonwealth offer their resignation from the latter, freeze their currency reserves in London, and commit themselves to military action if London did not accede to these steps. Banda's position was glaringly out of synch with that of his colleagues:

> Withdraw from the Commonwealth? Who do you think would suffer? Britain? No! Freeze bank accounts? Which bank accounts? Overdrafts! Many countries who were talking in that way have an overdraft in London now. Childish nonsense! . . . Military force? African military force? O.A.U. military force? Let me really laugh again. What single country in Africa today . . . from north to south, east to west, has an army that can take on and beat the Rhodesian Army? Not one!

Nevertheless, despite his pronounced Western mannerisms and his ridicule of certain aspects of mainstream African nationalism, Banda has made it clear that he is not a European patsy. Something of the double-edged nature of his political thought was revealed early in his career—in 1959, when, during the whirlwind rounds of anti-Federation speechmaking, Banda, as Philip Short put it, "jolted" Europeans by his assertion that "if the God of the Christians does not look after us, then the spirits of our ancestors will." Startling words from an elder of the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

From the beginning of his Presidency, it was Banda's conceit that he was forging a unique entity—an independent nation in which African practices were to be hung on European political, legal, and academic frameworks. His tirades against the utilization in Africa of the British judicial system provide an enlightening illustration of what he had in mind. There were grave differences, Banda maintained, between the African and the European conceptions of justice, and also between African and European judicial procedure. "According to the English or British law, you cannot accuse anyone of murder unless you have clear evidence," he told his parliament, "but here . . . you don't always need to have clear evidence to accuse anyone. . . . Under Chewa law, if you threaten a man [by saying], 'If you don't do so-and-so you are going to be killed,' and that man is killed the next day, you are guilty." African law, Banda argued, relied upon what was known about the defendant by those who were close to him; sometimes one just "knew" about a person's character, or the circumstances of the crime, and clever lawyers using hairsplitting logic should not be allowed to derail this more instinctive, less procedural judicial process. While such views partake of a certain amount of common sense, they also have less attractive implications. In 1965, prior to the trial of one Silombela on charges of treason and murder, Banda declared, "I know he is going to be found guilty. What kind of a judge can acquit Silombela? No. . . . He will be found guilty. And after that, you come and watch him swing."

Above all, Banda claimed that the form of government he sought to establish was a "Malawi democracy," and not "a carbon copy of any other country." Malawian democracy would be "guided," since Malawians, as Banda is quick to point out, are accustomed to a dictatorial system, having been ruled in colonial times by autocratic governors, and before that by tribal chiefs. "I am a dictator of the people," he

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declared. "I dictate by permission, by consent."

Banda's logic is difficult to refute: Why should a newly independent African people formulate political institutions that simply mirror those of the West? Why should an African leader be frowned on for attempting a bold political experiment? Why should pieces of the Western political machinery not be adapted to a specifically African use? But the rhetoric and the logic are belied by the brute facts of Malawi's politics under Banda's dictatorship. According to international human-rights monitors, his regime is one of the most oppressive on the African continent. Any act perceived as critical of Banda in any degree is summarily punished by imprisonment or even death. Government spies are ubiquitous, and the paranoia of the people in regard to politics perforce matches the paranoia of their government. The enlightened guide of Malawi's democracy has devolved into a despot; moreover, his proclaimed deference to African traditions is a smoke screen, for the model of his peculiar form of government is in fact anciently Western.

"The Republic" of Plato is one of the best-known works of classical antiquity. In essence, it is a dialogue concerning the nature of justice, the nature of the just man's soul, the nature of the just government or state, and the conditions under which the just state is best achieved. Ever since it was written, in the fourth century B.C., "The Republic" has been the world's most widely studied political treatise, representing as it does an attempt to define the Ideal State. Fundamental to the structure of this state is the supposition that individual men and women are suited by virtue of their native abilities for one of three roles in political life—roles that Plato saw as corresponding to the three functions of the human soul. The majority of men (and by Plato's lights the basest) are born to be craftsmen, farmers, and "menial" workers; a numerous but still select minority are suited by a warlike temperament to be warriors and guardians of the state; and the rarest and most élite are destined to be philosopher kings, whose burdensome duty it is to govern absolutely. Potential philosopher kings reveal their suitability to rule as early as childhood, and, once detected by appropriate officials, are rigorously trained for this lofty pursuit. Those who endure the lengthy training process (which lasts until the candidate has reached the age of fifty) and manifest the essential attributes of high-mindedness, temperance, and fearlessness of death are empowered as the rulers of the state.

It is not difficult to see why such a model would appeal to Banda, whose own high-mindedness motivated him to make the arduous trek from Nyasaland to South Africa in search of an education, whose temperance led him to embrace the dour tenets of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, and whose fearlessness of death was demonstrated in his often dangerous fight for his country's independence. His training, in life and in academe, was as long, varied, and demanding as anything Plato devised for the Ideal Statesman, and, in the London company of his generally less tutored fellow-nationalists, he must have begun to feel, if not a superiority, a certain advantage inherent in his various Western educational experiences and degrees. Once he became Malawi's President, his sense of a unique access to critical knowledge became more overt, and his speeches are peppered with suggestive phrases: "childish, just childish," "knock some sense into their heads," "childish nonsense," "too many ignorant people," "I talk to them like children." "Kamuzu alone knows what is best"—this was evidently the premise on which Banda built his republic.

ON the first day of class, I confronted a group of twenty or so beaming Latin students, all of them graduates of the mission schools in which Latin was taught. They ranged from those who needed to review the most basic grammar to those who were ready to advance beyond Caesar and tackle more difficult writers. The student sitting dead center in the front row, who was clearly the self-appointed spokesman (of this class and, I surmised, of all others), invited me to "tell the class about yourself," to which I responded with a brief autobiography. At the mention of Oxford, he looked coyly left and right, as if to solicit the attention of his classmates, before saying, "I, Madame, was at Cambridge."

Mr. Mwale (as I shall call him; I have altered the students' names throughout) already read Latin at a

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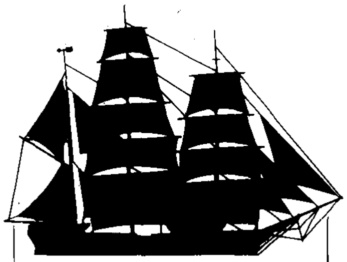
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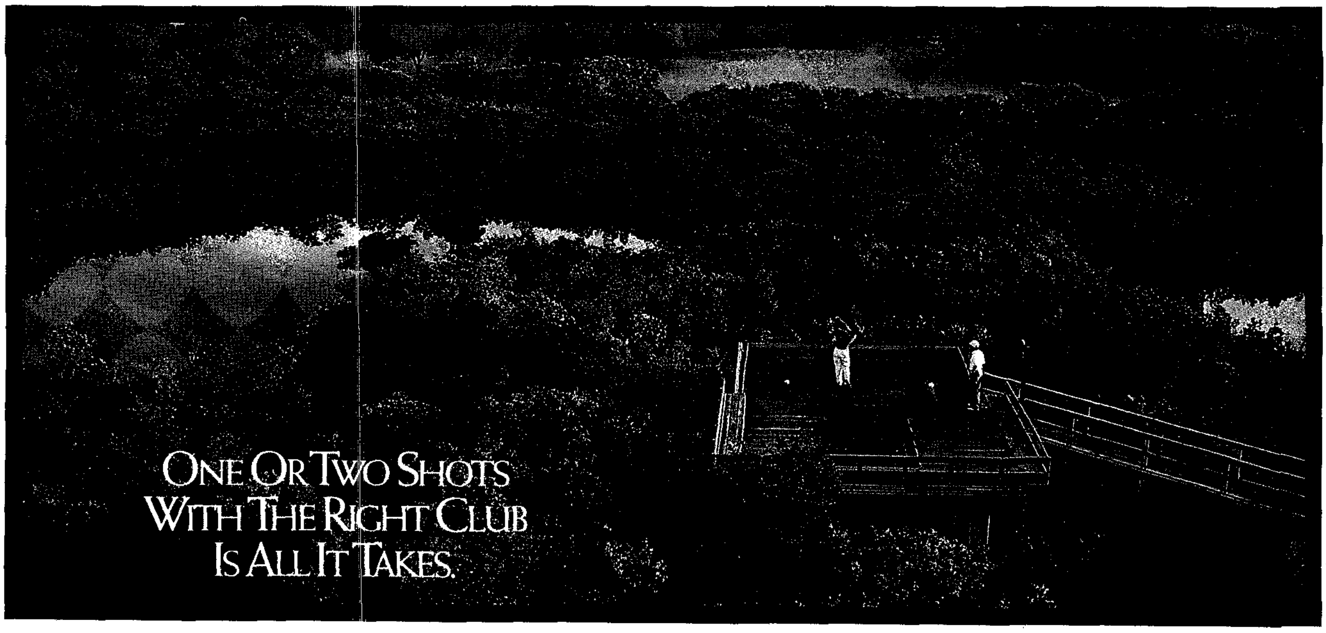
remarkably high level. He was a good deal older than the other students, and condescending toward my youth; he also had an unfortunate contempt for women, which he believed he concealed beneath an unctuous politeness. Nonetheless, he had lived an interesting life, having been the holder of some minor political office, a student at Heidelberg (in what subject I was never clear), and, for one year, a student in a diploma course at Cambridge. He was also the owner of a much-envied herd of splendid cattle, which he kept in his home village. More mysteriously, he had at some early stage of his career written a paraphrase of Homer's Odyssey in Chichewa, which he published under his own name. He was quiet about this particular accomplishment, but I was told by several people that it had brought him a limited fame at the time of its appearance, and that one could still find people in the villages who remembered the compelling tale and assumed it to be a reworking of Chewa oral tradition—a tribute to the true universality of the divine bard.

None of the other students proved as capable or as colorful as Mr. Mwale. Half a dozen of them were to be the core of the new classics program, taking courses in Latin and in classical civilization each semester. Two were slated to be classics majors, and the remainder were education students who had chosen to teach Latin in the villages after graduation. At the opposite end from Mr. Mwale in the spectrum of abilities was Mr. Modzi. Round, and burnished chestnut-brown, he glowed with the fire of loving-kindness that burned in his gentle soul. Impossible to imagine Mr. Modzi doing anything in his spare time other than sitting quiet and content in a spartan room, absorbed in his studies and waiting for the chance to welcome whoever might drift by. He greeted everyone in the Malawian way, which is to say that he bowed and clasped his hands together and gave his entire attention to the greeting. Indeed, his special brand of kindness could only be African, and I encountered it often in the villages. Solely by sheer conscientiousness and love for his task did Mr. Modzi succeed in mastering the antique tongue of the Romans.

Mr. Ngale had a high blank expanse of forehead, which lent him, alternately, the air of a great genius and that of an imbecile. There was something quietly dapper in his manner, to which I suspected that his cultivation of Latin was allied in ways I could not fathom. He was capable of faultless translation and eloquent explication of the most complex grammatical points, but the dates of assignments, the page numbers of lessons, the location of classrooms were beyond his grasp and had to be repeated to him three or four times—a task undertaken often by his exasperated fellow-students.

To Mr. Mtindi, life was a glorious joke, and his amusement at it sparkled in his dark eyes and sometimes choked his voice with laughter. The study of Latin proved every bit as entertaining to him as the other pursuits of his life. When called upon to translate, he would do so willingly and literally, instantly rendering the passage at hand ridiculous: "*Quae cum ita sint, Catilina, perge quo coepisti, egredere aliquando ex urbe; patent portae: proficiscere*" would become "Since things are thus, Catiline,



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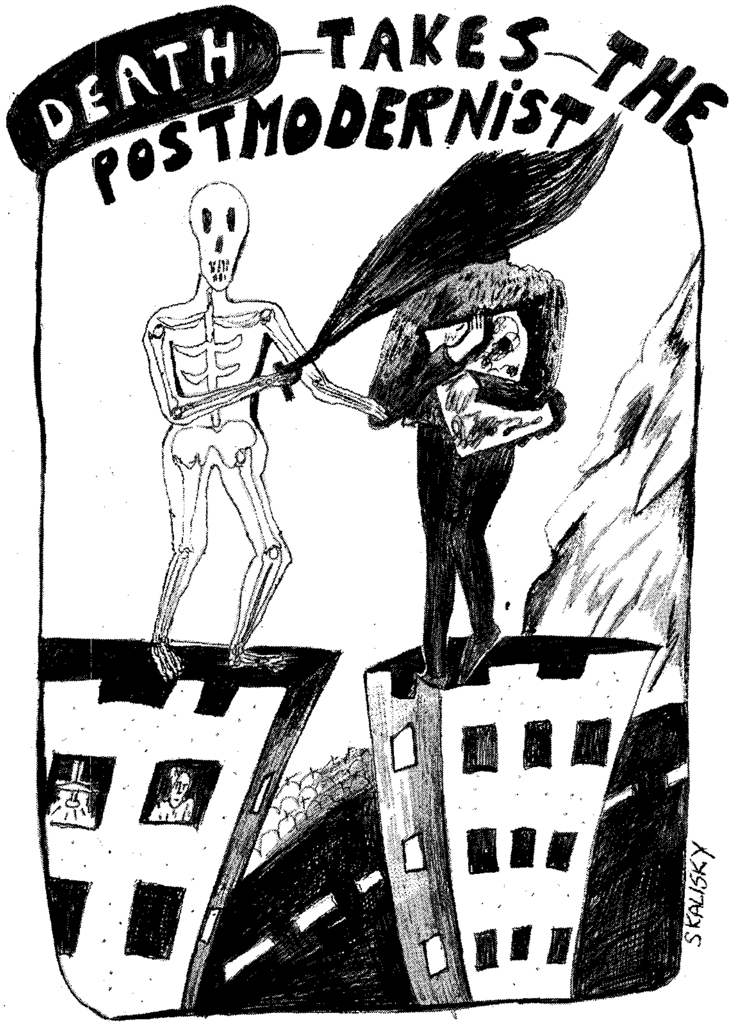
accomplish thoroughly those things that you have begun, go out of the city at some time; the gates are open: set out"—to which he would add, thoughtfully, "Indeed, Cicero was a wonderful orator."

Mr. Tzipo had clearly been marked by fate for great things: already sleek and prosperous in appearance, he was patiently waiting for destiny to catch up with him. He wore horn-rimmed glasses, which gave him the *gravitas* of a successful and busy executive, and his urbanity of speech and dress shamed even the Europeans. To him, Latin was of only political interest; if the Ngwazi's passion had been for Sanskrit, then Sanskrit it would have been for Mr. Tzipo. Yet he took an amiable interest in my instruction during this lull in what was inevitably going to be his hectic life.

And somewhere among this engaging group and their classmates was almost certainly a government spy. It was generally accepted by the university community that at least one "plant" was present in every class, and that anything remotely suspicious on the part of the lecturer or the students would be reported. About halfway through my stay at the university, I returned to my office early one day to discover a strange man, implausibly dressed in a raincoat, leafing nonchalantly through my papers. When I asked him what he was doing, he smiled, turned up the collar of his coat, and calmly let himself out the door.



The temperament of the guardians of the Ideal State, according to Plato, should be the same as that of "a well-bred watchdog": they should possess "quick senses to detect an enemy, swiftness in pursuing him, and strength, if they have to fight when they have caught him." In addition to the usual forces of law and order, the watchdogs that patrol Malawi include a special-service agency and a number of organized youth movements. Of the latter, the most vicious is the Malawi Young Pioneers, a paramilitary group given to marauding through the villages and inspiring terror and confusion by its wanton bullying tactics. This movement has as its ostensible purpose the training of selected young men and women in agricultural and rural community development; at the same time, however, members receive three years of military training, in order to assist the police and the military in the enforcement of "internal security." In practical terms, the group's object is to persuade the villagers that the strong arm of the government can reach them even in the isolated bush.

A few months after my arrival, four Chancellor College students were arrested and spirited away, reportedly to prison in Lilongwe. All forms of the media are tightly controlled in Malawi, and it was extremely difficult to follow the ensuing developments. (One handbook on Malawi notes that "the principal mode of transmission of information continues to be word of mouth." Often, more can be learned about Malawian internal affairs from the BBC—which, like the government, has its own set of informers—than from government sources.) Two of the students were released after only a few weeks, two after a year; this much, at least, was ascertained by their reappearance in their villages and on campus. The charges against them were vague: alleged marijuana use, suspect poetry in the student magazine, suggestive "comments." People who knew the students, though, agreed that they had posed no political threat whatsoever. Apparently, what had done them in was a dangerously anomalous manner—a distinctive appearance or way of speaking that marked them as too intelligent, inquiring, or nondeferential for their own good. Malawi is rife with the ironies reflected by this event: on the one hand, its President insists on importing the branch of Western humanities most closely associated with the birth of new ideas and individualism, and, on the other, he insures that the similar development of his own people is deterred at all costs. The fear of being seen as in any way unusual guarantees that all but the most courageous will suppress their individuality. It should also be noted, however, that this tendency is inherent in Chewa culture—as it is in other traditional societies. Colonial writers commonly observed that a Chewa feared to be different in any way from his fellow-villagers: doing something as innocent as painting one's pots in an innovative style, for example, was to risk being singled out as a witch.

The state's guardianship operates on levels more subtle than the usual police tactics. Plato held that poetry and music had to be rigorously controlled; typically, poetic works are regarded by the common man as inspired and therefore possessed of a kind of divine wisdom, when in reality (according to Plato) the poet is no more aware of the true nature of things than any other non-philosopher. The poet is a danger to the Republic because his ignorance is disguised by seductive

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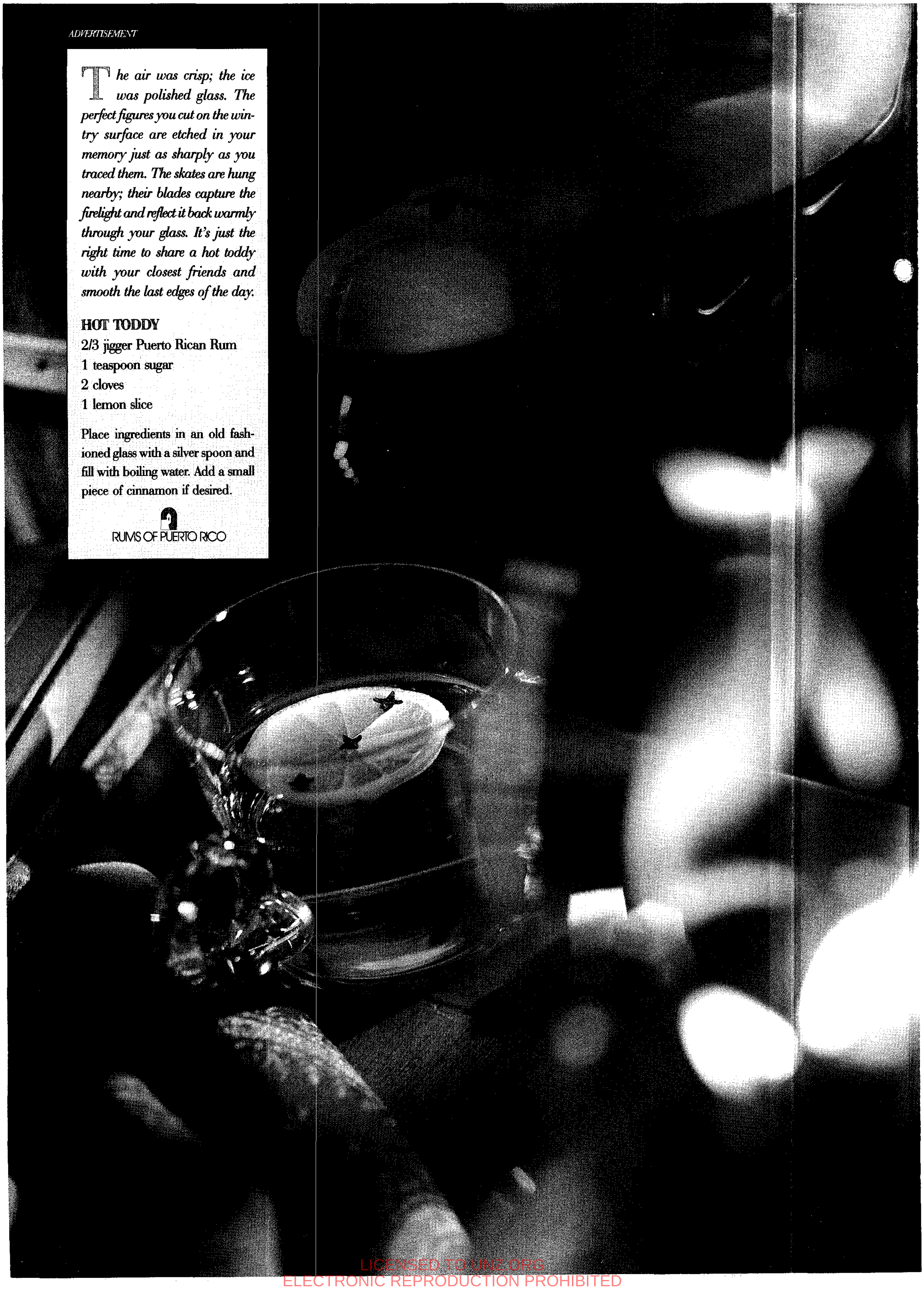

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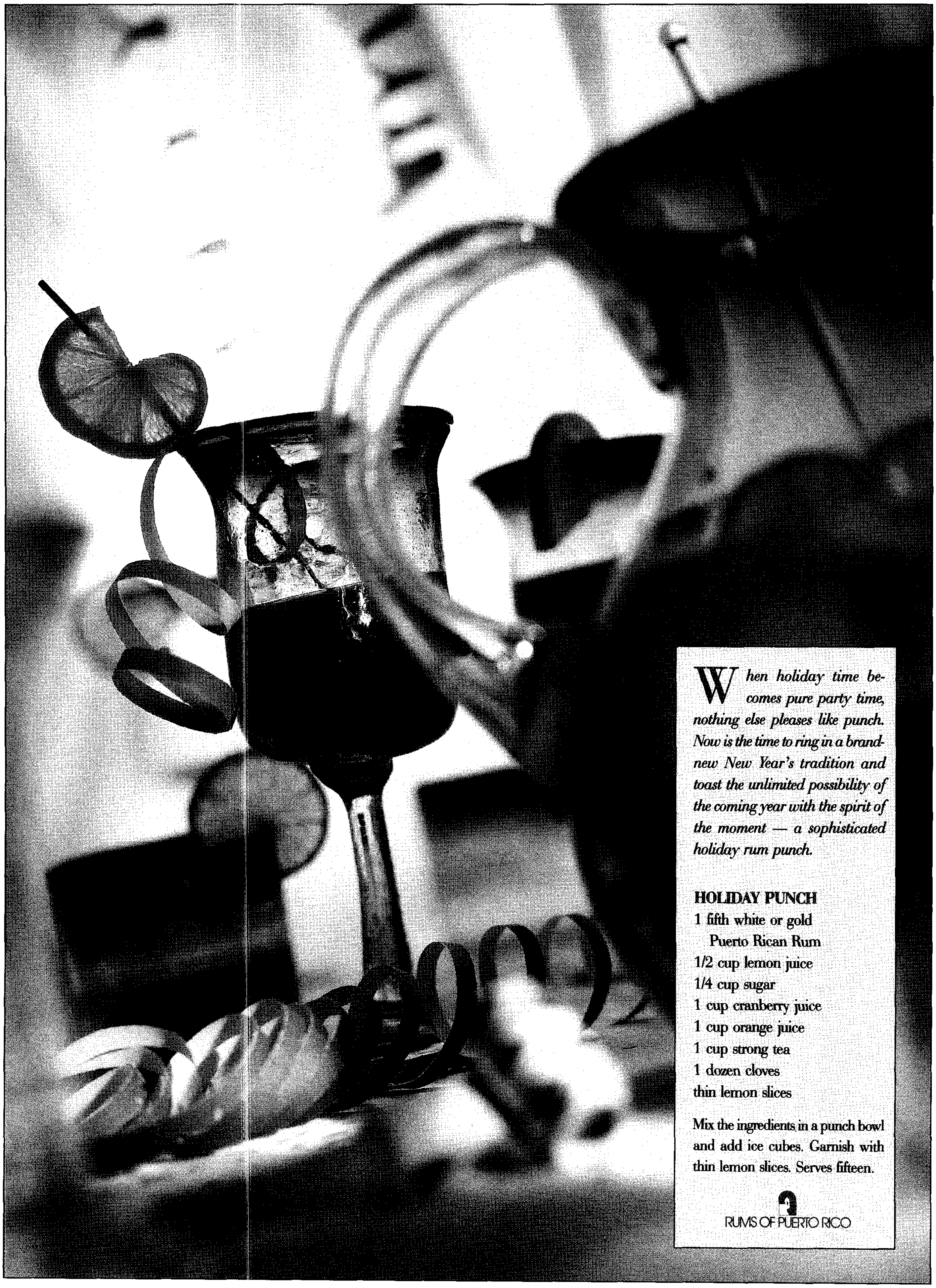

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1 cup orange juice
1 cup strong tea
1 dozen cloves
thin lemon slices

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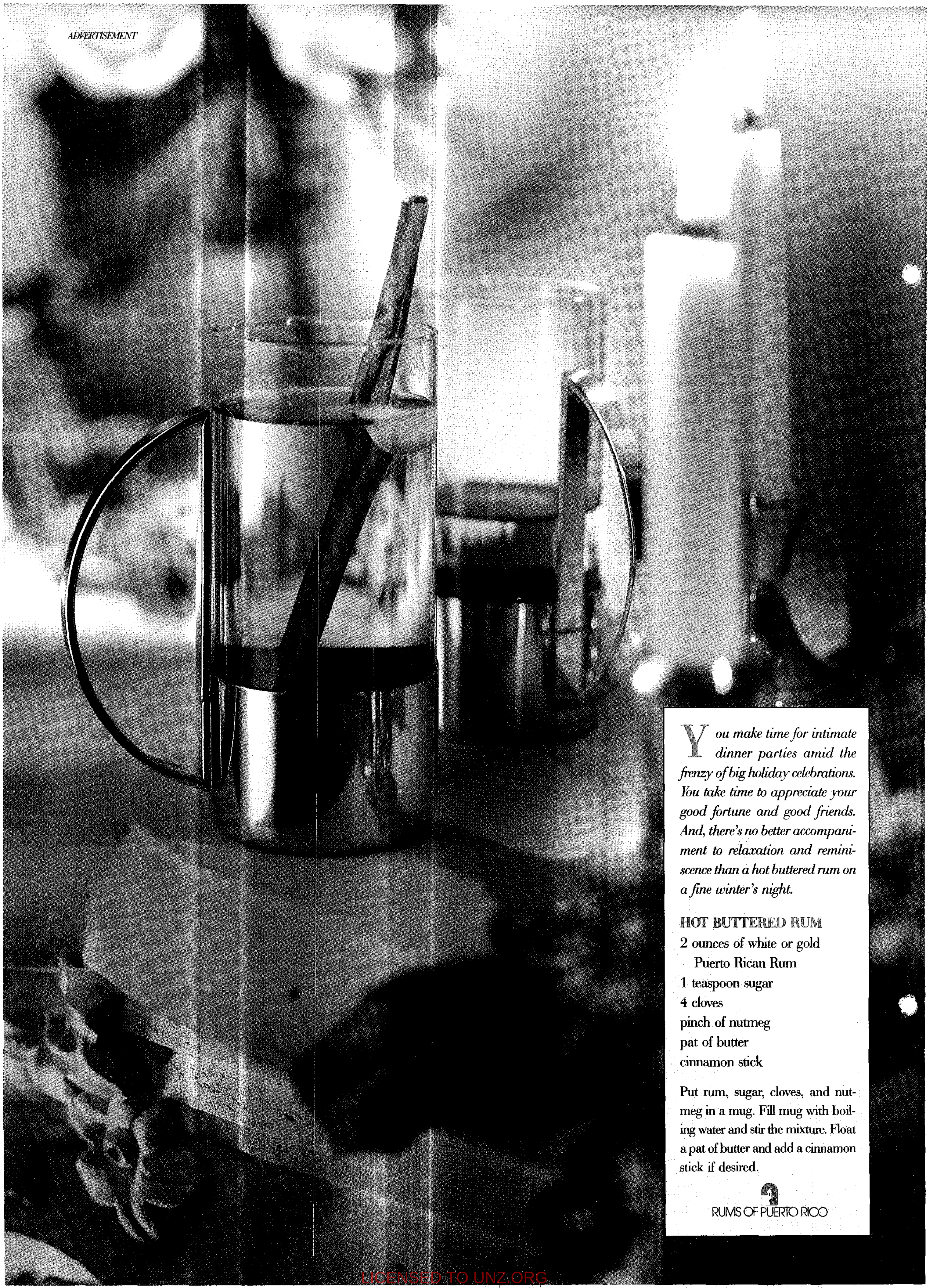

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2 ounces of white or gold Puerto Rican Rum
1 teaspoon sugar
4 cloves
pinch of nutmeg
pat of butter
cinnamon stick

Put rum, sugar, cloves, and nutmeg in a mug. Fill mug with boiling water and stir the mixture. Float a pat of butter and add a cinnamon stick if desired.

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powers of speech, and because he is able to move the masses by an appeal to their lower emotions rather than to their powers of reason. Moreover, musicians and poets alike strive to create striking and novel works, in order to capture the attention of their audiences. Since these art forms are by their very nature innovative, they present a danger to the stability of the state. As a result, all music and poetry is forbidden in Plato's Republic, with the exception of airs of a morally uplifting nature ("We must . . . compel our poets, on pain of expulsion, to make their poetry the express image of noble character").

President Banda indeed encourages the performance of traditional songs and their accompanying dances; the songs, however, have been given new words and new functions. For example, an old song traditionally sung by women and girls as they dance the *chintali* (a dance performed in a circle) at weddings is now also sung by women at political gatherings, or specifically to entertain the President. The bridal song

Koto koto koto
M'soziyo
Koto koto koto
Kodi olikati wamuna

(Koto koto koto
Behold the tears.
Koto koto koto
Where is the husband?)

has become

Kokolikoko
Kwacha ku Malawi
Ngwazi Kamuzu pobwera

(Kokolikoko
There is dawn in Malawi.
The hero Kamuzu as he came).

Similarly, a song traditionally sung by village elders returning from a drinking party ran thus:

As the hyena was howling yesterday,
I was in the bush,
I did not sleep, travelling the whole night.
Wayu wayu wayu

The new song is as follows:

Kamuzu was coming,
coming from England,
while holding a whisk in his hand.

In addition to several courses in Latin, I offered a course in classical civilization, which surveyed Greek and Roman history, literature, and art. The civilization-course textbook (part of an "emergency air freight" order from Britain) took pains to underscore how far the Romans, our cultural ancestors, had advanced from their lowly Iron Age forebears—farmers and shepherds, who lived in small wattle-and-daub villages. A photograph illustrating a reconstruction of a mud-walled thatched hut was included, by way of making this point memorably graphic, and was contemplated by the class with some bemusement, as its architecture differed in no significant way from that of their own homes.

The new program had the part-time services of one Reverend Hunter, an Englishman who taught the beginning Latin course. He rode to classes on a heavy, old-fashioned bicycle, impeccable in his black ministerial frock and crisp straw boater, through the mire of the wet-season mud and the clouds of the dry-season dust alike. He was an elderly man—exactly how elderly I never ascertained—but there did not seem to be a person in Zomba who could remember when he had not been at the seminary up the road from the college. He seemed incapable of easy conversation with adults, but he was an effective teacher and was beloved by all the Malawians I met; to Africans, his eccentricities were less striking, Europeans being generally regarded as an eccentric species in any case.

The mission-school instruction in Latin that the students had received had been solid but dry, and it was gratifying to watch their genuine excitement at discussing the translated assignments from a literary as well as a grammatical perspective. The most advanced class was reading Virgil's Aeneid, hitting all the standard passages: Aeneas' escape from Troy; his love for and abandonment of the Carthaginian Dido; his descent to the Underworld to hear the prophecy of his destiny.

I began one class discussion by suggesting that Aeneas was a problematic hero: "Virgil has not presented him as a realistic and many-dimensioned character but, rather, as a symbol—the symbol of Roman greatness and Roman virtues. Every individual desire or attribute this hero shows signs of possessing is subverted to the larger destiny of Rome. In human terms, Aeneas' abandonment of Dido, which results in her suicide, is unforgivable, but the poet seems to be saying that the sacrifice of both Dido's love and the hero's own love is justified—demanded, in fact—by the part that Aeneas must play in the grander plan. But do the circumstances of the Aeneid's composition have any bearing on this issue? One must remember that the idea of writing the national epic was not the poet's own but had been imposed upon him by the Emperor Augustus. In this respect, what is one to make of the puzzling ending of Book Six—the Underworld scene, in which the shade of Aeneas' dead father, Anchises, prophesies the future greatness of Rome before escorting his son back up toward the land of the living:

Sunt geminae Somni portae, quarum altera fertur
cornea, qua veris facilis datur exitus umbris. . . .

Twin are the gates of Sleep, one made of
horn, said to be a ready exit for real shades.
The other, shining, is of luminous ivory,
through which the dead send false dreams to our world.
His story told, Anchises sent his son and the prophetic Sibyl
through the ivory gate.

What is one to make of the fact that Aeneas, as the harbinger and symbol of Rome's greatness, is sent forth through the gate of false dreams? Mr. Phiri?"

"I think in Aeneas the poet has painted his own portrait," Mr. Phiri replied. "For, just as Aeneas was not able to satisfy his own desires and to develop as an individual, so was Virgil made little by the command of his Emperor. The poet is saying that the dream of a great empire based on such individual suppression is false."

Class discussions became heated on a number of topics: for example, the desirability of a Pax Romana achieved at the cost of the independence of the smaller, less powerful states that Roman might subsumed. It was also pointed out to me that the serenity of expression on classical statuary, intended to denote an aloofness from and thus a superiority to the petty problems of mortality, is echoed in the

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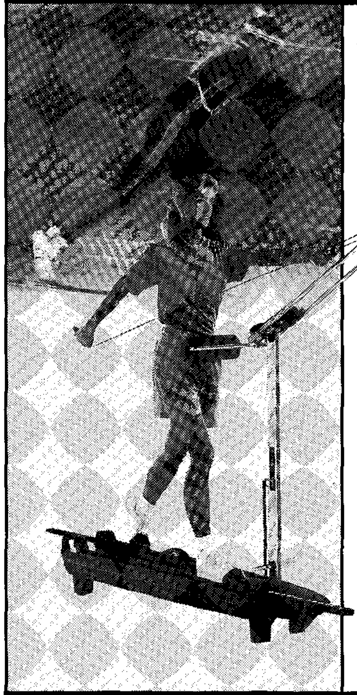

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African belief that a well-brought-up individual does not display exaggerated emotions. Only barbarians and white people, apparently, grimace and frown, and advertise to the world that they have no control over their circumstances or over themselves. And on one memorable day, when we discussed "The Republic" the class was spontaneously on its feet.

I wanted to integrate the classics program as much as possible with the university's other humanities subjects, so I solicited liaisons with other departments and accepted any invitation to coöperate. Oral traditions (Homeric and African), Roman imperialism (cultural and otherwise), empire building, the sociology of slavery, epic, praise poetry (Pindaric and Zulu), sacrificial rites, ancestor worship—all represented topics in which there was a genuine resonance between the classical tradition and that of contemporary and historical Africa. One particularly fruitful connection was made with the faculty of the English Department, who invited me to speak on Sophocles' "Antigone," then being taught in a first-year literature course. The action of the play centers on the dilemma of the heroine, Antigone, who is torn between obedience to the laws of the state, which forbid the burial of her traitorous brother, and the higher laws of religion and morality. As traditionally taught in the West, Antigone's dilemma is rationally argued, point and counterpoint, like a legal case, but the inexorable urgency of her situation is better appreciated by an African audience, who know at first hand the disastrous consequences of violating kinship claims and denying correct ritual burial—consequences that are visited on the entire community when higher forces do not receive their due respect.

While unexpected affinities between the classical and the African traditions continually emerged, discussions did not always reveal a cozy compatibility. One case in point was the argument that arose among the intermediate-level Latin students, who were reading Catullus, a Roman poet who wrote in the middle of the first century B.C. In the thirty years of his short life, Catullus wrote only one book of poems, comprising a variety of types of verse: lyrics, long narrative poems, sarcastic and scatological works, arguably one of the most beautiful elegies ever written

("Ave Atque Vale"), and a number of passionate love poems. It is for the love poems that he is best known, and, in particular, for those addressed to Lesbia, a woman some years older than Catullus, politically well-connected, and, as "The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature" states, "notorious for her profligacy." Catullus' poetry was going down very well in class, his personal character less so.

"Is it not strange to you, Madame, that history has preserved the complete . . . um . . . *corpus* of such a notorious pervert?" This from the annoying Mr. Mwale, whose early exposure to Western literary greats had endowed his speech with an Elizabethan floridity.

I replied that "pervert" seemed an unnecessarily harsh word to apply to the man who had been termed "the tenderest of Roman poets," but then, gathering from the embarrassed silence of the class that Mr. Mwale was not alone in his objection, I began to ask some questions. What, specifically, was so offensive about Catullus? The fact that Lesbia was a married woman? But I had never heard a man in Malawi called a pervert for carrying on such an affair. The fact that the poems were irreverent? But, from what I understood, the songs that the village women sang while pounding maize were every bit as bold and racy as anything in the poems.

Mr. Mwale came straight to the point. "The poet, Madame, involved himself with an older woman, and for that he could only be called a pervert," he declared, somewhat sharply. After a certain amount of thrashing back and forth, the following information was elicited: In Malawian traditional culture, deference must always be given to seniority, and, at all costs, age is respected. Women, however, are not respected—at least, not until they have reached an advanced age and been awarded the neutral status of elders. A man, therefore, who would deliberately put himself in the unnatural position of having to defer to a woman was obviously a pervert.

From the malevolent glint in Mr. Mwale's eyes, I saw that this provocative line of discussion was far from ended, and, sure enough, at his next tutorial he raised the issue again. Our theme was Greek tragedy, and we were reading Euripides' "Medea." The play's eponymous heroine, it will be

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remembered, is a Colchian sorceress, who marries the Greek hero Jason and is later abandoned by him when he makes a more politically advantageous marriage with the daughter of the king of Corinth. Medea, in a rage of wounded love and pride, kills their children to spite him and then takes to the skies in a dragon-borne chariot.

"It is a disturbing tale, Madame, this woman running amok, slaughtering her own offspring, shouting and cursing and shaming her husband as he tries to insure a more secure future for his family, at the sacrifice of his own domestic happiness," Mr. Mwale observed. "Perhaps"—his voice rising—"this is the Western ideal of the liberated woman! We in Malawi would never permit such a shockingly . . . um . . . *wanton* performance."

In fact, as I was pleased to point out to Mr. Mwale, "Medea" had met with tremendous success when it was performed in an Africanized version, by an African cast, in Nigeria, some years earlier. The plight of Medea herself—a woman abandoned on alien soil and bereft of all civil liberties—has much in common with the lot of an African woman, who typically moves to her husband's village after marriage, where she has no rights at all. There were also African parallels to Medea's use of magic. The abrupt departure of a high-ranking Malawian lecturer at the university, for example, was widely known to have been prompted by the fact that he was discovered having an affair with the wife of a man feared for his magic. The lecturer simply fled, believing that his death was assured if he remained. And there was the curious case of the man with two broken legs who was recuperating in a local hospital. According to the nurses, he had broken his legs when his maize basket crashed—a maize basket being the large, round container in which women carry corn and other produce on their heads. The unfortunate man had been flying in his basket one night north of Zomba and had crashed on Mt. Chinduzi. I told the story to my students, and one and all received it with no show of incredulity. Not everyone had these powers, they said. One had to study certain practices. In any case, the man was foolish to be flying anywhere near Chinduzi, an area notorious for land-to-air interference.

But there were times, it must be confessed, when the problems presented by vocabulary alone appeared overwhelming:

> Behold,
> for you the Nymphs bear lilies in generous
> baskets, for you the shining Naiad,
> plucking pale violets and poppyheads,
> plaits narcissus and fragrant fennel blossom;
> then, weaving them with cassia and other pleasant herbs,
> adorns the soft whortleberry with golden marigold.

Or:

> Do you not see how Soracte shines out
> in deep snow, nor how the laboring trees now
> sustain their burden, how
> the river stands immovable with its keen ice?

Some idea of snow, to be sure, could be had from the fluffy white substance sprayed at Christmastime in the windows of the Kandodo supermarket, in front of which a thin, woebegone Malawian Santa Claus would stand disconsolately ringing a hand bell in the tropical sun. But eventually I came to regard the classical texts as akin to travel books: they did not have to be understood in exact detail to be comprehensible and transporting. To insist that literature is relevant only to its own culture, moreover, would be to imply that African literature should be confined to Africa, and never read in the West. The following lines from Zaire's Mwindo epic are probably as strange to non-Nyanga ears as Virgil might be to the ears of an African:

> When the night had become daylight, in the morning, Mukiti made himself like the anus of a snail in his dressing up; he was clothed with raphia bunches on the arms and on the legs, and with a belt of bongo antelope, and he also carried an *isia*-crest on his head.

The students formed a Classics Club, which, among other things, performed a memorable recitation of Catullus' racier poems translated into Chichewa. As a means of promoting the new department, the club also conducted a Latin-translation competition in the fourteen secondary schools in the country which taught Latin. The willingness of the students to dive into this unfamiliar subject, to grapple with new issues and to take them to heart, was the most immediately rewarding aspect of my work. Their attitude no doubt reflected their awareness of having "made it" into the university system, a piece of good fortune that could never be taken for granted in Malawi, but it reflected, too, a curiosity and enthusiasm for the classical subjects themselves.

Sometimes these ancient Western texts proved more enlightening and appropriate than one might have imagined. Euripides' "Bacchae" was written in approximately 406 B.C., and is one of the world's most psychologically insightful works of literature. Its subject is the confrontation between Pentheus, the young, macho, inflexibly self-righteous ruler of Thebes, and Dionysus, the god of wine and vegetation, dance and sensuality, the "loosener of care." The drama of Euripides' play focusses on Pentheus' refusal, as a conservative and emotionally repressed young tyrant, to recognize the power of the languid, effeminate, sensual newcomer. This refusal destroys the young king, for though recognition of the god's power has come late to Greece, Dionysian power is incalculably ancient: it is the sap that rises in the trees, the life pulse, the sex drive; it is raw power, unrefined by intellectual pretensions.

The European confrontation with the mystical, irrational, at times dark forces of Africa is a common theme in literature. In most instances of this archetypical drama, the European discovers that the intellectual resources in which he has taken such pride are simply inadequate. His wisdom—or, to use the Greek term (played upon to great effect in the "Bacchae"), his *sophia*—is shown to be mere facile cleverness when compared with the wisdom of a people who have from time immemorial lived life close to the bone, in perpetual contact with the only issues that in the final assessment really count: life and death.

The inability of Westerners to cope with these unfamiliar forces was illustrated on several occasions by members of Zomba's expatriate community. There was the case of the missionary who became so incensed with what he imagined to be the misdeeds of his cook that one night he barged into and ransacked the man's quarters, hurling the contents out onto his front lawn. There was the case of the cuckolded professor, who spat out a public denunciation of his wife and her "fancy man" while standing on a chair in the senior common room, and added that he wished he and they were citizens of a Muslim country where her faithlessness would be punishable by death—

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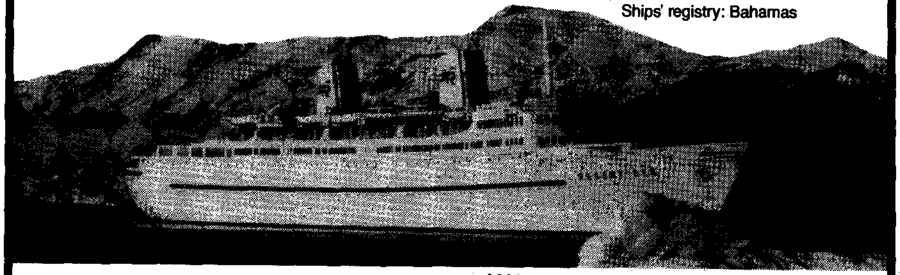

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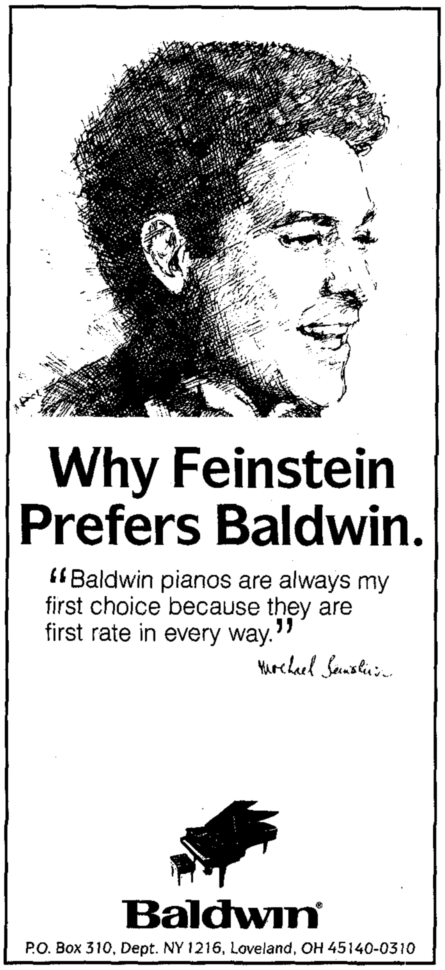
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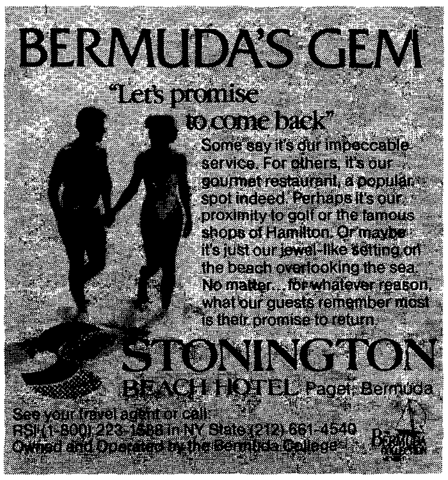
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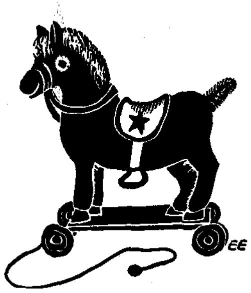
a fantasy so overwhelming that he began to cut and thrash about with an imaginary sword. And there was the instructor whose overt racism provoked such hatred among the local Africans that one night a group of them hurled bricks through his bedroom window, showering him with shards of glass; his reaction was to board up every window in the house and confine his existence to one inner room. The spilled blood was never cleaned up, and the rare visitor was made to contemplate a dark stain on the bedroom floor while being lectured to on the savagery of the natives.

As part of my early public-relations efforts, I accepted the challenge—a more apt word than "invitation"—to deliver a public lecture in one of the college's seminar rooms on the classical topic of my choice. There being in Malawi a dearth of visual entertainment (no television at all, and, in Zomba, no cinema to speak of), I decided to give a talk on classical art, and thus make use of my modest collection of color art slides, which I sensed would do more to draw a crowd than anything I might choose to discuss. My strategy was successful to a degree that I did not anticipate. I was not yet aware of either the thoroughness of Malawian censorship or its Victorian character. No printed image, including those in *National Geographic* or the fashion magazines, escapes the censorship board's judgment. Later, I discovered in the university library expensive photography books depicting African tribal life in which bare loins and breasts had been meticulously inked over with black Magic Marker bras and frilly skirts.



This, then, was the context in which I presented my illustrated lecture. It is unnecessary to mention that in Greek and Roman art the human figure is usually scantily draped or nude. With a great sense of mission, I spoke solemnly from the lectern, backlit by the unspeakable images projected on the screen behind me. With some pride, I noted the rapt attention and evident excitement of the crowd, and looked forward to the questions that would surely follow. The first of them forestalled all others that might have been raised. It came from one of the female students, who asked, in a clear, ringing, and faintly derisory voice, why all the male statues had such small penises—a question that prompted every African male to lean forward in his chair and grin enormously and every European male to sit up a little straighter. I realized that, as a young single woman (an anomaly in the university community), I was on dangerous ground, for even the most sober explanation could be construed as indicating a more than academic knowledge. I recall that I pulled from my sleeve notions of "proportion" and "idealization of the human form" and "Olympian nobility," but I knew that moral ground had been irretrievably lost.

IN May of 1983, the college faculty was summoned by the vice-chancellor to fulfill a curious commission. President Banda had ordained that prospective members of parliament pass an English-proficiency examination, since all debating in the Malawian parliament, true to the British model, is done in English. The parliament is composed of a hundred and twenty members, sixteen of whom are appointed by the President; the rest are chosen in national elections but are subject to ratification by the President. In the event that certain successful candidates are not to the President's liking, he can use the results of the English-proficiency examinations to establish their ineligibility for office. Following a precedent from ancient Greece, the parliament functions as a kind of chorus, with Banda in the role of *chorâgos*, or choral leader, directing an extended hymn of multivoiced praise. Every year, on opening day, a motion is made by one of the members that the House give thanks to the President in his capacity as the nation's savior, which motion is then enthusiastically and unanimously seconded. For the next few days, each M.P. takes the floor and attempts to outdo the paeans of his or her colleagues (for there are female members), and to dwell upon the manifold ways in which the Ngwazi has helped his or her district. (Many of these tributes, it should be pointed out, are sincere. The majority of Banda's critics live in the urban areas—and in jail or exile; among the rural people, he has a certain popularity. This is in spite of the antics of the paramilitary internal-security forces, who are often taken by the rural populace to be acting on their own, or at the order of some power other than Banda.)

The administration of the English-proficiency examination was by my time a well-established operation. Two members of the faculty—one black and one white—were assigned to each election district, the unspoken assumption being that a Malawian might be needed to interpret but the Queen's English could be judged aright only by a European. Although participation in such a dubious undertaking was hardly to be regarded as a distinction, the event was looked forward to with a degree of cynical excitement; it was, after all, a chance to travel during term time, at the government's expense. I, too, was caught up in the suspect spirit of this enterprise. I had not been long in the country, and I looked forward to being sent somewhere new. It was therefore disappointing to discover that my assigned district lay only hours outside Zomba. Instinct prompted me to check the assignment list, where I discovered that no women had been assigned to districts that would require an overnight trip. The vice-chancellor's secretary explained to me that the wives of Malawian lecturers would not endure having their husbands sent off overnight with another female, and particularly a white one. When I suggested that it was the untrustworthy husbands who should be kept close to home, the matter was referred to the vice-chancellor, a British political scientist, who, perhaps with a certain malicious satisfaction, ordered me to Karonga—Malawi's Ultima Thule, in the extreme north.

On the appointed day, a tiny twin-prop plane took me and one of my colleagues northward, following the shore of the lake and briefly passing inland over the orderly acres of pine that have reforested the Viphya Mountains, and the sculpted folds of the grassy Nyika highlands. Karonga itself was a balmy and pleasantly sleepy lakeshore town. On arrival, we were taken to the examination hall, a concrete, corrugated-iron-roofed building in such bad repair that I took it to be abandoned but which in fact served as the local primary school. A mismatched collection of tables and rickety chairs had been set up in neat rows in front

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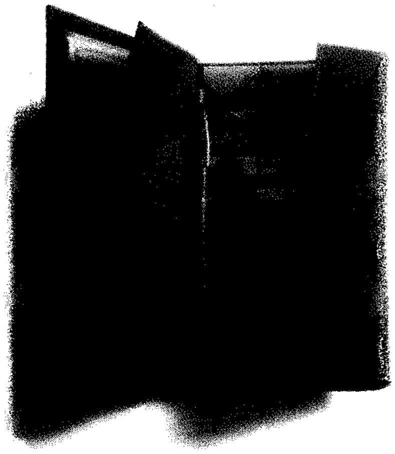

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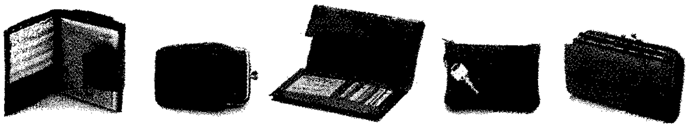

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of a sturdy, old-fashioned kitchen table with two proper chairs, where we, the examiners, would sit to oversee the following day's events.

The local guesthouse served as our overnight accommodations. On a small patio, which doubled as a dining room, we were served an enormous bowl of rice piled with goat meat—the latter a luxury that the innkeeper could not often afford for his own family. There was no electricity in Karonga, and that night we took paraffin lanterns to our rooms. When I awoke, at dawn, thin curtains were billowing in the room's only window, which overlooked the lake, at this hour as still and unmarked as a protected pond.

The early morning hinted that the rest of the day would be fine, but by the end of breakfast a steady rain was falling, and when my colleague and I arrived at the examination hall we found its bare yard churned into mud. Inside, the walls resonated with the din of rain pounding on the iron roof. By ten o'clock, the candidates had congregated inside the streaming doorway, all of them dressed in their best clothes, which they had somehow managed to keep clean and crisp in spite of the rain. From a window, I watched an elderly man take shelter in a small thatched hut across the way in order to mop himself dry with a handkerchief and put on the shoes he had carried with him in a bag before he took the final plunge across the mired yard.

As the candidates assembled, the shabby implications of the enterprise hit me. With few exceptions, the men and women who had made the bold move to attempt political office were older people, well known in their small communities, and respected for their character or their wisdom, or for the aura of leadership they possessed. These people we now herded to the examination tables, where they sat smiling nervously at each other, their hands visibly shaking as they took up their pens. While English is taught in primary and secondary schools throughout Malawi, it is not everyone—and particularly not everyone of the candidates' generation—who has had the advantage of a formal education. An additional disagreeable fact was my relative youth: in a society in which age earns respect, my supervisory role must have been a further demoralizing factor.

The examination was modelled on the type of comprehension tests one encounters in S.A.T. examinations in this country. The instructions, which we had to shout above the drumming of the rain, informed the candidates that the exam would be in three parts, the first consisting of multiple-choice questions based on several passages of text. In my own experience, the taking of multiple-choice exams is an acquired skill, and for those who had never done so it was clearly a bewildering process. The second part would test aural comprehension. Several passages would be read out loud, and then followed by questions:

"The export of ground nuts increased by what percentage between the years 1965 and 1970?"

"Cotton accounts for what per cent of Malawi's domestic produce?"

"In 1968, total exports rendered how many kwacha of revenue?"

The final section was more elaborate. After a ruthless collection of examination papers in varying stages of incompleteness, my colleague and I sequestered ourselves in a small room at one end of the hall, which one candidate at a time entered to receive the final instructions: "Read the passage on this page out loud, as if you were in parliament."

This was for most candidates far and away the most agreeable part of their ordeal, largely because they misunderstood its intent, believing it to be a test of performance—of one's ability to act the role of a member of parliament—and not of one's ability to read. As a consequence, an account of the economic effects of drought in South Africa was passionately declaimed, from a standing position—usually very close to the examiners' desk—and accompanied by many forceful and imaginative oratorical gestures. The memory of one woman in particular has stayed in my mind: her reading ability was among the worst of all the candidates', but a glance at the frustrated intelligence, denied its own medium of expression, that shone from her eyes left one with no doubt that a potentially competent public servant had been lost to the system.

According to Plato, it is necessary for the state to devise a "convenient fiction," which "the community in general, and if possible the rulers themselves" must be induced to accept. Central to this "noble lie," as it is often called, is the Myth of Metals:

> It is true, we shall tell our people in this fable, that all of you in this land are brothers; but the god who fashioned you mixed gold in the composition of those among you who are fit to rule, so that they are of the most precious quality; and he put silver in the [Guardians], and iron and brass in the farmers and craftsmen. Now, since you are all of one stock, although your children will generally be like their parents, sometimes a golden parent may have a silver child, or a silver parent a golden one, and so on. . . . So the first and chief injunction laid by heaven upon the rulers is that, among all the things of which they must show themselves good Guardians, there is none that needs to be so carefully watched as *the mixture of metals in the souls of the children*. If a child of their own is born with an alloy of iron or brass, they must, without the smallest pity, assign him the station proper to his nature and thrust him out among the craftsmen or the farmers. If, on the contrary, these classes produce a child with gold or silver in his composition, they will promote him, according to his value, to be a Guardian. . . . They will appeal to a prophecy that ruin will come upon the state when it passes into the keeping of a man of iron or brass. Such is the story; can you think of any device to make them believe it?
>
> Not in the first generation; but their sons and descendents might believe it, and finally the rest of mankind.

One of the most striking of Banda's long-term policies has been his consistent attempt to develop and bolster the morale of his own bronze class—the small-scale farmers who account for the majority of the population. To this end, he makes highly publicized tours of the smallholdings of every district in the spring of each year, offering words of encouragement and praise to the struggling farmers and scolding those whose fields show signs of neglect. Perhaps the most familiar newspaper image is that of the tiny, impeccably dressed President beaming at a field of maize that towers above his head, with a caption reading something like "NGWAZI PRAISES MAIZE OF CENTRAL REGION." Whether or not Banda's policy of promoting the self-image of the nation's farmers is a strategy for insuring that they do not aspire to a status beyond the bronze category, it has had at least one important positive result: the majority of the rural population has remained to farm

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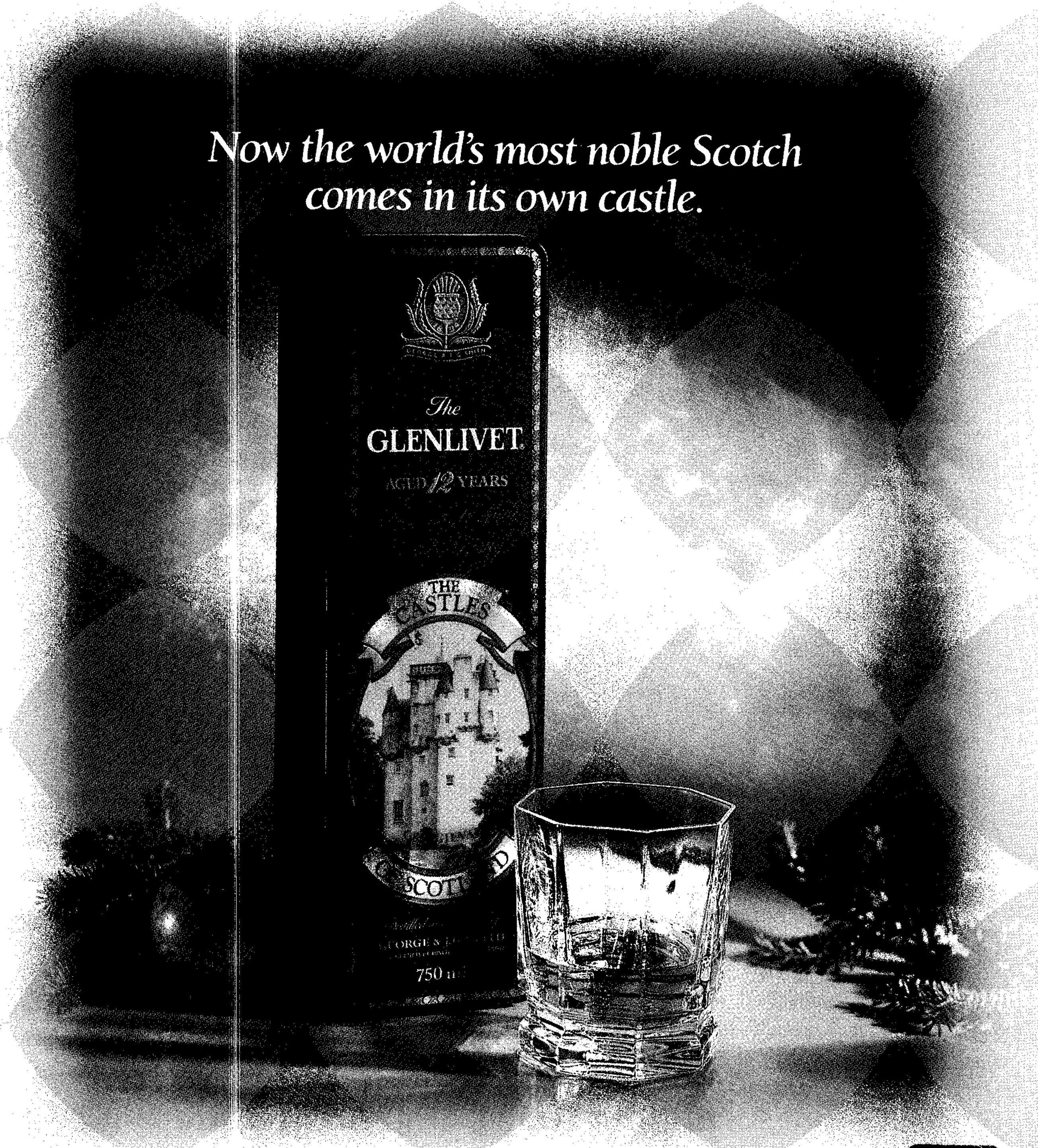
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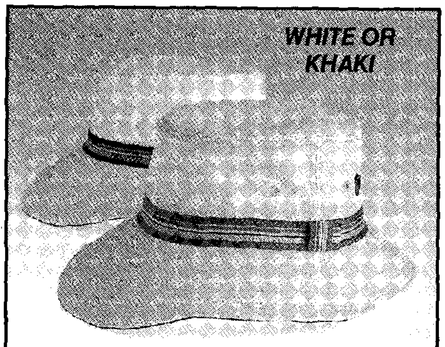

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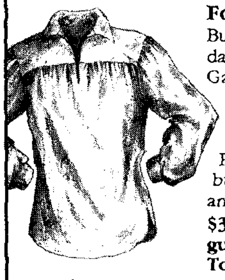

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in the villages, unlike rural people elsewhere on the continent, who have migrated to the urban areas in search of salaried work that does not exist. It is also true that Banda has poured money into agriculture, resisting the trend in newly independent Africa to spend money on high-profile but less necessary enterprises.

In the matter of education, however, the implication of the Myth of Metals is clear: there is no need to educate beyond his station a child who is destined by nature to be a farmer. According to a recent UNICEF survey, thirty-five per cent of Malawi's primary-school-age population (generally, those children aged six to fourteen) is estimated to have adequate school facilities. Only four per cent of the country's children go on to secondary school. The same report describes fifty-nine per cent of Malawian men and eighty-three per cent of Malawian women as illiterate. And while it might, someday down the road, be Banda's intention to offer adequate primary, and perhaps even secondary, education to every child in the country, the budget concerns of the present and the foreseeable future suggest that education will remain reserved for the intellectually élite.

The British system of examinations to determine who will proceed beyond the primary-school level, and, later, who will move on to a university or other institution of higher learning, is meant to insure that the potential silver or gold alloy in a child of bronze is recognized and the child allowed to advance to his or her proper station in life. Most children in Malawi are, of course, born into the bronze class—sons and daughters of small-scale farmers and, less typically, tradesmen—and the intensity of their struggle to advance beyond this birthright may be incomprehensible to most Westerners. The parents' ability to pay the annual primary-school fee of some fifteen kwacha can make or break a young career. This struggle for education—so unfamiliar in the West, so commonplace in Malawi—is best told by the participants themselves. And this has been done, thanks to a project undertaken in 1984 by Dr. Sharon Nickols, a senior lecturer in home economics at Chancellor College. Dr. Nickols invited her students—all of them women—to write autobiographical accounts of how they arrived at the university. The eight women who

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responded were pleased enough with the results to allow her to publish their testimonials, with personal and place-names changed to guarantee the anonymity of their contributions, which are remarkably intimate. One young woman wrote:

> My mother had had one daughter before my arrival. Since my parents had been married, my mother had six miscarriages which were all boys and only the seventh pregnancy survived, which was my sister. This did not please my father so he had another wife in a certain village which was the nearest village to where we were living. My father was then happy because this second wife bore him a son. . . . It was the second term of my primary education in Standard One when I noticed that things were changing for my mother who was always looking miserable. . . . One night at 12:00 midnight, I heard voices of people talking very loudly and this awakened me. I saw my mother standing beside my bed saying, "Stay well with your stepmother; I am going.". . . My mother was crying beside me and within a few minutes, my father came and grasped my mother and tore all of the clothes she wore, saying, "You are going out of this house with nothing. You only take what your stupid parents bought for you. . . . You came here with no child, you are going with no child.". . . My stepmother arrived when I was still at school. When I came back from school, she was sitting on the verandah. I greeted her respectfully only to be answered by a rude remark, "Just go and eat your *nsima* [cornmeal porridge, the staple food of Malawi]. May I warn you that I cannot be your cook for you are big enough to prepare your own food.". . . I knew now that my life will be very miserable. . . . When it was time for sleeping, my stepmother told me to sleep on the floor while her children each had a bed. She also told me that I will no longer go to school for my duty was to be a nurse to her little child. . . . During the morning, I did as I was told and prepared breakfast for her children and off they went to school. After they had gone to school, I did all the housework and after finishing I had to stay with the small child, give her the milk, change the nappies, and wash them as quickly as possible. That was how the day was spent. I obeyed everything she said without a word. Any mistake I made, I was beaten heavily even in the presence of my father who never uttered a word. I was working like a slave, thus doing the whole housework which was too heavy for my age [seven years]. All this heavy work I did not mind, but the most painful thing was not attending school. . . . Two years elapsed. . . . One day, while I was sleeping, [my stepmother] came to me and said, "Wake up you big-headed and good-for-nothing, stupid girl. Who told your mother that you were not attending school? You Tumbuka people are very foolish (for she is a Chewa). So I tell you, you will be going to school, but on the condition that you wake up at three o'clock and do all the housework, and when you are back from school, you have to work even harder for all of the work to be done here will still be done by you.". . . God is powerful for despite the ill-treatment at home, I was the most brilliant child in my class.

The prime example of this relentless intellectual culling is represented by one of Banda's most passionately supported projects—Kamuzu Academy, the nation's foremost private preparatory school. In Banda's conception, the academy is the Malawian embodiment of an élite British public school, and, in accordance with his vision, it has earned the nickname of "the Eton in the bush."

The academy is set amid the savanna grass and scrubland of the central province, on the sparsely populated outskirts of Kasungu. Banda grew up in a small village near Kasungu, and legend has it that he received his first educational instruction at the roots of a village cassia tree. Kasungu has benefitted considerably from this historical association, and a visitor is struck by signs of its gentrification: smart houses, with windows and painted doors, instead of the more usual mud-and-thatch huts and cinder-block houses; telephone poles and electric wires; and a general air of modest prosperity. Bush grass, dry and golden at the time of my visit, surrounds Kasungu, and the scenery differs little from the savanna of the nearby game park, which afforded me my first glimpse of lions, elephants, and zebras in the wild. A few miles southwest of the town, one is suddenly aware that the roadside scenery is changing—becoming greener, tidier, and finally, as the road winds on, positively manicured. Yet even the landscaping of the bush does not prepare one for the first glimpse of the academy, a complex of cloistered and arcaded brick buildings set beyond sentry-guarded iron gates and a serene ornamental pond, in four hundred acres of lawn, with a clock tower rising in surreal juxtaposition to the high, harsh African sky.

The gates enclose the self-contained world of some three hundred and sixty boarding students and three dozen European faculty members. Fifteen million dollars was expended on the construction of this exclusive institution, and it requires two million dollars a year to run—figures that are a jarring contrast to the annual seven-and-a-half-million-dollar national education budget. Officially, the academy is Banda's gift to the nation, and it is said to be financed from his own pocket—a claim that is entirely feasible, since Banda owns nearly all the shares of Press Holdings, a corporate conglomerate that controls as much as thirty per cent of the national economy.

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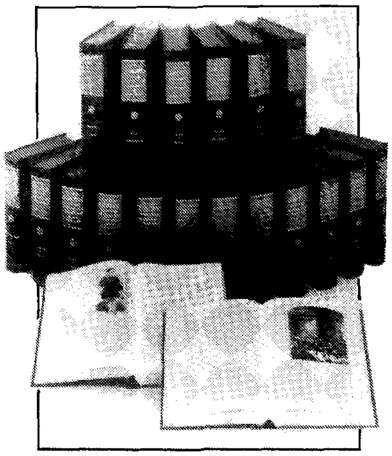

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comfortable living quarters, academy students enjoy a nine-hole golf course, an Olympic-size swimming pool, science laboratories superior to those at Chancellor College, and a library whose architecture is modelled on that of the Library of Congress. The teaching staff lives in a trim modern suburb, and, in their leisure hours, its members drift over to the faculty club, which offers all the amenities of a good country club. Daily life at the academy is marked by the rituals of the best British public schools, in all their arcane detail. There are six "houses," four for boys and two for girls (roughly a third of the academy's students are female), each headed by student prefects. The school's dress uniform consists of a green blazer, worn with green trousers or a green pleated skirt, a crisp golden shirt, a tie, and a straw boater. The dining hall serves the same sausage and mashed potatoes that have appalled generations of British schoolchildren, and there are daily tea breaks. In addition to swimming and golf, students play hockey, soccer, rugby, squash, and tennis (cricket has never caught on). In adapting themselves to the physical facilities alone, all but the most privileged students must make a radical cultural adjustment: recruited, typically, from the villages, and accustomed to sex-segregated communal outhouses and (at best) one village pump, the students are introduced to the "bed-sit," flush toilets, showers, electric lights, and knives and forks. In village schools, a few outdated books are shared, and instruction may take place in the open, before a battered blackboard propped against a tree. Academy students can study their own textbooks in their rooms, and, in addition, have access to maps, a language lab, audiovisual materials, and, of course, the convenience of a complete library.

The academy, a six-year institution, accepts only the top sixty students in the country each year, selecting them on the basis of the national examinations taken by all primary-school graduates as well as the academy's own examination, which includes an interview. The annual tuition of K. 255 is comparable to the fees for other secondary schools in the country. By Banda's decree, at least one girl and two boys from each district must be accepted each year (there is a similar quota system for university applicants), to insure that no one of the country's several tribes, which inhabit distinct geographical locales, is overrepresented. (Ironically, this policy, though it was intended to combat tribalism, has proved to be a bone of contention for the Tumbuka people, in the north, who disproportionately excel in this system of examination.) A former academy headmaster is on record as saying that he was never pressured to accommodate children of government or Congress Party officials.

English is the medium of instruction for all subjects, and the curriculum is fashioned to prepare the students for the O-level and A-level board examinations, administered in England. Students are taught the sciences, mathematics, English and African literature, French, art, and history; the study of Latin, Greek, and ancient history is, of course, mandatory.

Banda has said openly that no African is competent to teach at Kamuzu Academy, a statement that has caused untold resentment and has, in effect, redrawn the educational blueprint of the country. Banda's exclusion of his own countrymen from teaching at his academy—in the face of the fact that roughly three-quarters of the university's teaching staff is Malawian—suggests that he believes the university to be the inferior institution. It also raises the question of where academy students are to turn after graduation. While there are enough standing scholarships to European universities to accommodate about half of each graduating class, most of the graduates attend the University of Malawi, where they often encounter, at least initially, a certain amount of hostility both from students and from the staff. Each department at Chancellor College tends to have a highly structured curriculum, requiring specific courses to be taken as prerequisites for other courses, and a gifted student with a good general knowledge of a subject is thus not usually free to enter at a higher level than someone less prepared or less able. Even so, most academy graduates are, across the board, academically superior to their fellow-students.

The negative aspects of the academy aside, the educational philosophy behind it poses a number of challenging questions. The rationale of Banda and the academy's board of trustees is that the young intellectual élite of their country should be given an educational experience equal to that available in wealthier, developed nations. The academy's conservative, Eurocentric curriculum, they maintain, is the same as the one that has nurtured the Western intellect, which has produced the fruits of "development" that the First World now enjoys. They argue that it is perverse for First World nations to urge Third World development and to insist at the same time that it be imposed on an inadequate intellectual infrastructure and limited only to those aspects of life necessary for survival—health services, agriculture, and so forth. In justification of the swimming pool, the golf course, and the elaborate uniforms, academy supporters point out that it is their hope that graduates who eventually assume positions of national importance in Malawi will be able to hold their own with confidence among their peers of other nations. (A government official who spoke with me was himself an urbane product of the Malawian transcultural educational experience, but, as he told me, he "wasted a lot of time becoming socially acclimatized.") The academy's professed guiding philosophy is not to eradicate its students' sense of their Malawian and African heritage but to insure that, like Banda, they can master two worlds.

THE end of the academic year at Chancellor College is marked by two rituals: a three-hour comprehensive examination given in each subject after the British fashion, preparations for which are carried out with an assiduousness unmatched by any other aspect of university life; and the pomp of commencement, a ceremony I found unexpectedly moving. A procession of university administrators and faculty members, resplendent in their European university robes, filed into the college auditorium, or Great Hall. The vice-chancellor then took center stage, flanked by his colleagues. As he called the name of each student, a drum was pounded. The drum had been the gift, some years earlier, of Jomo Kenyatta, the legendary former ruler of Kenya, and was sounded, as the vice-chancellor declared, to remind the assembly that this was the

University of Malawi—*boom!*—in Africa. Relatives crowding the balconies cheered, ululated, and danced at the proclamation of the names, which ran a cultural gamut: Aloysius, Namwino, Penelope (for one young man), Dawn, Erik. Women students accepted their diplomas on bended knee—a traditional female sign of respect (and subservience). After the ceremony, the graduates congregated with their parents on the Great Hall lawn, where a group of mothers, in their brilliant and best *mpangwes* and turbans, circled in a spontaneous dance.

My first academic year had been one of long working hours. For the development of a fledgling program, it had been necessary to address several fronts simultaneously. I had to establish departmental requirements for both a four-year undergraduate and a five-year teaching degree, but my immediate responsibility was to the students at hand. The difficulty in obtaining textbooks was an ongoing problem. Each student received an allowance of fifty kwacha—about forty-five dollars, at the exchange rate of the time—for a semester's worth of books. As these were usually sold at unsubsidized, Western prices, it was impossible for students to meet the basic needs of more than one course. Instead, there was heavy use of the photocopy machines. After the first year, I had a stroke of good fortune when a classics professor at the University of Zimbabwe sold to me—or, rather, to the classics program, those entities being at the time identical—a crate of secondhand Latin textbooks, which made a handy departmental library.

There was also the problem of general library books. The library budget as a whole was inadequate in every subject, and the sight of students "researching" through odd volumes of an old set of the Encyclopaedia Britannica was common. Given the high status of classics, a nest egg of some ten thousand kwacha for library books had initially been pledged by the university offices, but the promised funds were never released, and one of the first lessons I learned as an administrator was that the term "budget" referred to a kind of Platonic Form, the apprehension of which is both the highest desirable Good and, for most mortals, a practical impossibility. In general, the funds for library books, slides, maps—anything at all beyond

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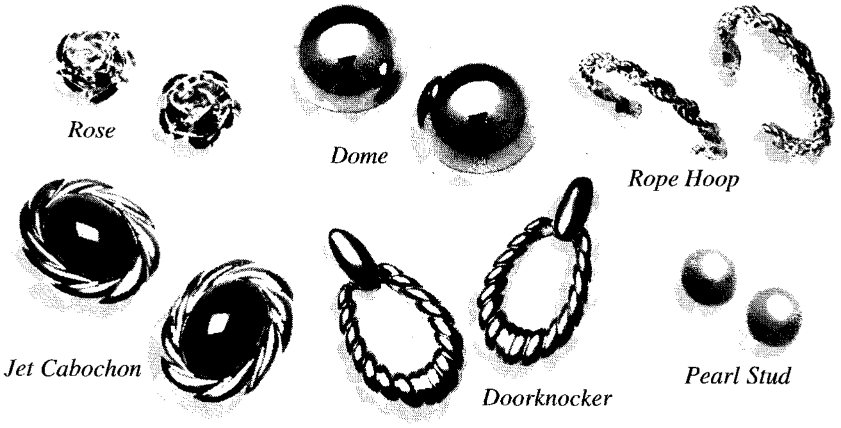

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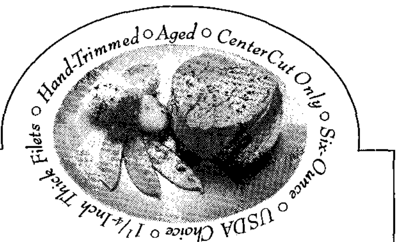
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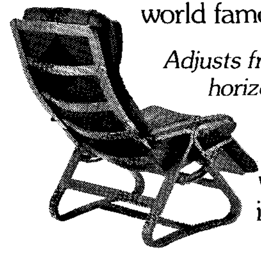

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the most basic operating costs—had to be solicited from sources outside the university, or the country. This problem was not peculiar to classics, but was shared by every department. Appeals for assistance were continually being made to the German, American, Canadian, French, and British Embassies—either for grant money that each administered or for a specific commodity, such as slide projectors, books, and microscopes. The science and education departments fared far better than the humanities in terms of foreign aid—a fact that reflects the First World's priorities regarding Third World development.

A grant by the British Council for classical texts for the library and, from the Canadians, the donation of a slide projector (to be shared jointly with the Department of Art History) were examples of the kind of modest but enormously welcome gifts that gave me some sense of tangible progress, but the stiff competition among so many suppliants for the attention of the same limited number of donors prodded me to seek out other sources. There was a Greek bakery in Zomba, and at the start of my second academic year, through a young woman who worked there, I learned of the existence of a sizable Greek community in Blantyre, composed for the most part of tobacco planters. It occurred to me that a community that was both small (and therefore vulnerable) and prosperous (and therefore significant) might well be represented at some diplomatic level, and a few inquiries unearthed the little-known fact that there was an honorary Greek consul in Malawi.

After more than a year of what were at times twelve-hour working days, I had become adept at performing most bureaucratic feats, including distasteful necessities of life such as fundraising. It was therefore but the work of a moment to draft a letter to the consul, which began with an acknowledgment of the Greek contribution to world culture, continued with a woeful account of the difficulties, chiefly financial, in sharing this contribution with our friends and associates in Malawi, and declared unblushingly toward the end, "In short, I share the belief of His Excellency the Life President, the Ngwazi, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, that Classics is the cornerstone of education." The con-

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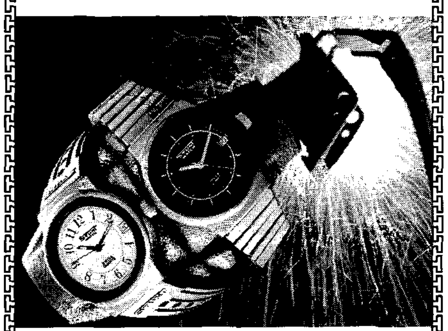

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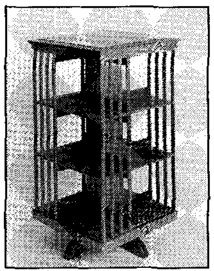

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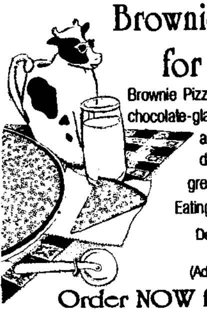

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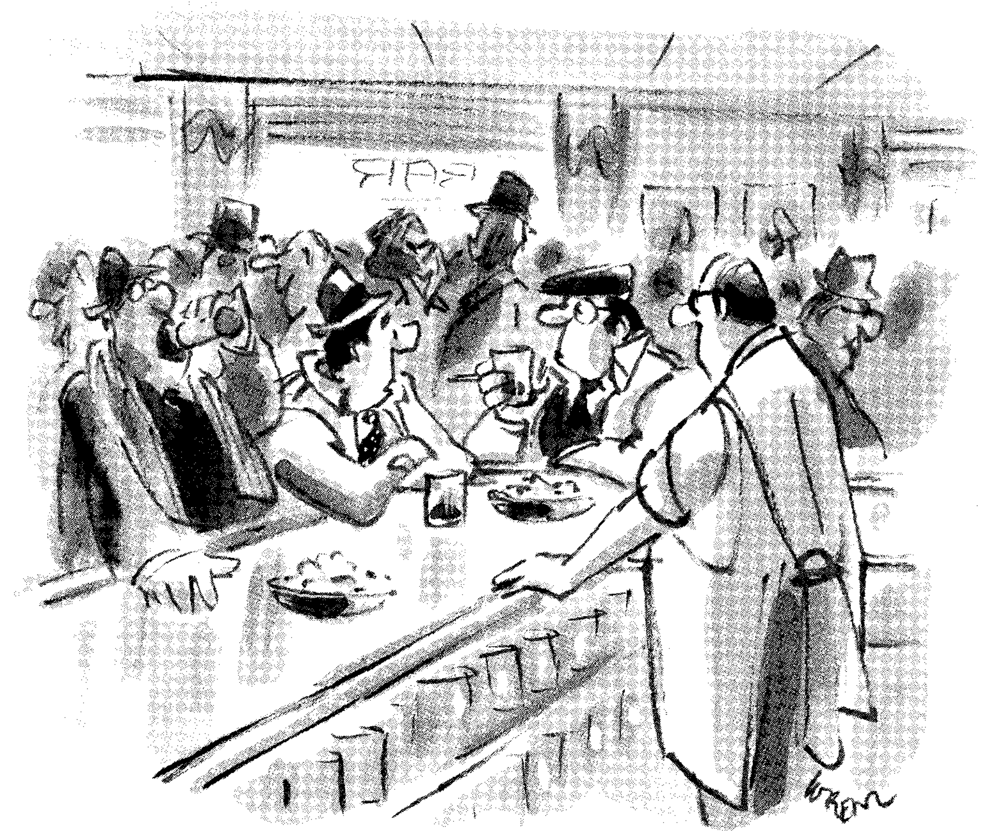

"I managed to hang on to the house and the car, but I had to spin off the wife and kids."

clusion consisted of a direct query to the consul as to whether his government wished to advance the patrimony of its people by means of a generous donation. It was signed by the Head of Classics, Chancellor College, University of Malawi.

Had the consul and his colleagues been less than the honorable and sentimental men they were, they would have shown up with surly expressions and put-upon airs at the meeting that was eventually held, at their behest, with the vice-chancellor, the heads of department of the humanities faculty, and me. Instead, the dark eyes that surrounded the conference table sparkled with warmth and pride. As the consul spoke, he placed his hand over his heart; his eyes filled with tears; he described with manifest feeling the emotions that Miss Alexander's letter had stirred in his breast, his gratitude as a Greek that his people and their history should be so revered, and his subsequent immediate contacts with his government, which had been as touched as he was, and had authorized the visit of the Greek Ambassador to South Africa, seated here (with a nod) to his right.

The Greek contribution to the Chancellor College classics program consisted of an outright gift of nearly ten thousand kwacha's worth of books, with a pledge of five thousand kwacha's worth annually over the next few years; the sponsorship of a faculty member from the National University of Athens; and a scholarship for a year's graduate study in archeology at the National University, to be awarded to a promising student every three years. The prospect of archeological training was exciting, because the Malawian Ministry of Antiquities was struggling to produce a team of archeologists to excavate a considerable number of unexplored early settlements—in particular, those dotting the ancient shoreline of Lake Malawi.

On a more informal basis, Blantyre's Greek community provided a memorable Easter celebration, to which we at the university were invited. Among the other guests was a visiting Greek Orthodox dignitary—a large, dour man, swathed in a blue cassock, who watched the evening's festivities and traditional dancing with expressionless eyes and a downturned mouth. For the space of about half an hour, I found myself to be the immediate neighbor of this joyless figure, who was reverentially saluted by all, and we exchanged a few words—with difficulty, for he spoke little English. Two nights later, at about half past one in the morning, I was awakened by a long-distance telephone call. It was the sombre prelate, who had apparently learned enough English to tell me that he was sending me a plane ticket, in order that I might enjoy his company for an unspecified period, starting from the coming weekend. As Virgil observed long ago, "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*," which can be fairly translated as "I fear Greeks who bear gifts."

BY the end of my second academic year, which marked the termination of my original contract, my excessive workload had taken its toll, and I had become used to feeling rundown. I had suffered a bout of malaria, an attack of what were known as "putsi" flies (which lay their eggs in one's skin), a tropical ulcer, and the bite of a poisonous snake ("Need not be fatal," according to a field guide to African reptiles, which identified the culprit as a "burrowing adder"). I had also begun to recognize the limitations of living in a town as isolated as Zomba, which offered few distractions. Not only were there no movie theatres but there were no restaurants or cafés; after working hours, residents of the town turned in to their houses—to their families if they had them, to their own resources if they did not.

From time to time, to be sure, this routine was broken by the rare Occasion. A German orchestra (sponsored by the German Embassy) materialized one evening for a performance in the Great Hall, which was packed to overcapacity at the prospect of novel entertainment. Unfortunately, the exclusively Mozart program did not prove to be the crowd-pleaser its organizers must have hoped, and by the end of the second movement of the first piece the audience was divided into two camps: scowling, red-faced Europeans and laughing Africans, whose only applause was reserved—along with catcalls—for the beautiful female violin soloist. The appearance of Jim & Jesse & the Virginia Boys, a folk and bluegrass band (sponsored by the United

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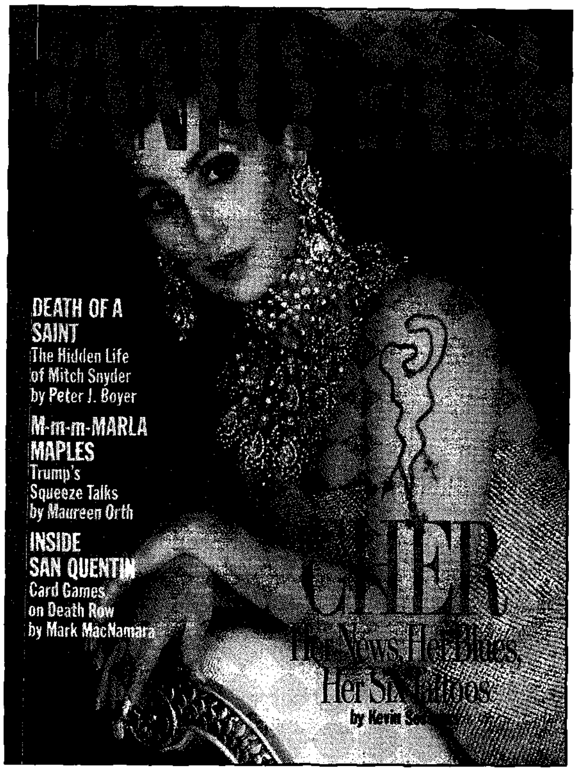

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States Information Agency), on the other hand, was a roaring success, the banjo player alone winning three encores. A faded, decades-old movie version of "The Importance of Being Earnest" (sponsored by the British Embassy) was met with utter silence. Another British film offering, however—David Attenborough's "Life on Earth" television series, shown on a movie screen—was well received, and a spontaneous ovation was given to a cheetah when it chased down its prey. Local dancers, particularly from the villages of the lake region, were always sure hits, although their performances were noticeably ill-attended by Europeans.

But in general daily life in Zomba was uneventful. I took to getting up with the light in the morning, at around half past six. I would have breakfast on my *khonde* in the company of two purple, gold-crested, crimson-winged lories, who lived somewhere in the garden. Later in the morning, I would walk to the college, passing women on their way to market, who strode by me swift and erect, despite what looked like neck-breaking head loads. In the early evening, I would go for a walk in the hills or on the land that lay around the golf course, either alone or in the company of a friend. After dusk, I had dinner on my *khonde*, often under the soulful gaze of an owl who visited my jacaranda tree each evening. After dinner, I would work or read, and I was usually in bed by ten o'clock.

At times idyllic, at times sterile, this was a way of life on which, I realized, I would have to set some time limit. That limit might be the original two years, or it might be five, but it would not—for me, at this time in my life—be forever. And yet there were, every day, experiences and encounters that I knew would always haunt me. The walks at dusk, for instance, past the darkening Botanical Gardens and higher into the hills, with the scent of cedarwood from the dinner fires like incense in the evening air; or the long hikes on the Zomba plateau, whose extraordinary beauty at one sunset had made me clap my hands to my head and involuntarily cry out loud; the sight of the vast black Southern Hemisphere sky when I awoke at night; the trips on the Shiré River in a little four-man boat, with hippos blowing and popping out of the water within a paddle's reach, and elephants trumpet-

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ing as they paraded along the river shore; the intimacy of the friendships one made in this closed, villagelike community. Despite my various malaises, despite the work, the politics, the negative aspects of life as an expatriate, there were ample inducements to stay on. There was also the heady feeling that I was close to pulling off what everyone had doubted was possible: the establishment of a viable, functioning—as opposed to a token—Classics Department. I felt that if I stayed on a little longer, to see the next couple of terms through, I could be sure of solidifying what had already been accomplished. I did not realize it at the time, but this was the kind of Robinson Crusoe, miniature-empire-building mentality that made Africa and the colonies so attractive to Westerners, and gulled us into staying on and on, often past the point of being useful. I had also perhaps succumbed to the belief, common to the expatriate, that things would fall apart without me. At any rate, for all these reasons I extended my contract until the end of the 1984-85 academic year. Partly by way of rewarding me for doing so, the university administration committed itself to advertising for two additional staff members for the classics program as well as for my replacement.

By the time my extended contract was up, the classics program had been awarded full departmental status by the university senate. I had also succeeded in obtaining funding for my replacement in the form of a Fulbright teaching fellowship, and I left with the satisfaction of knowing that the department would be adequately staffed. From reports I have received over the years, I gather that the Classics Department is, if somewhat shaky, still in existence: there is now a permanent staff of two and a half—including the apparently immortal Reverend Hunter—but the Greek connection, sadly, has evaporated. All the core students obtained jobs, most of them in teaching: one is completing graduate study abroad and is earmarked for a university appointment; another stands high in the university administration. I recently heard that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the humanities faculty was commemorated by speeches in Latin, Greek, and Chichewa. I am also told that the grass fence around my house has fallen down, and that my garden is planted with maize and vegetables, but that Malawi itself is otherwise "as you left it."

Only once in his life was Plato given the opportunity of seeing his political theories put into practice: when he was in his early sixties, he was invited by Dionysius of Syracuse to construct in the tyrant's kingdom the Ideal State outlined in "The Republic." The result of this collaboration was a dismal failure—in part because of the young tyrant's ego and in part, no doubt, because of the nature of the Ideal State itself. Plato had foreseen that the actualization of the blueprints he carried in his head might have to wait for another age and another place:

> If ever in the infinity of time, past or future, or even today in some foreign region far beyond our horizon, men of the highest gifts for philosophy are constrained to take charge of a commonwealth, we are ready to maintain that, then and there, the constitution we have described has been realized.

What will happen in Malawi when its sole Philosopher King, now aged ninety-three, passes away? Banda has not named a successor, as is traditionally the practice of a paramount chief. There has been much speculation, both at home and abroad, about who will succeed him, but Banda seems to feel that his provision for his people lies in the graduates and future graduates of his academy—"Academy" being the name of the school that Plato established in Athens for the education of philosophical statesmen. It is one of the ironies inherent in the utopian ideals of the Republic that the measures taken to insure the education of the intellectually élite will be most intolerable to that very group. Young men and women who have been exposed to history's most enlightening thinkers cannot be expected to enter with ease or good will into a society that discourages this enlightenment. As Plato recognized, it requires not one generation but several to legitimatize new myths; and whether the educated élite of Malawi have been sufficiently converted, in this short time, to their Philosopher King's philosophy is yet to be determined.

—CAROLINE ALEXANDER

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THE DIPLOMATIC ROUND

IN A NEW ERA AND GROPING

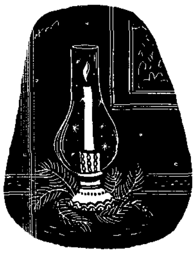
AMONG the great expectations aroused by the rout of Communism was a role for the United Nations that would match its lofty purpose. With the Cold War over, threats to peace and stability could at last be managed as they ought to be managed. The performance of the U.N.'s Security Council during the past two years—especially its resolutions authorizing sanctions and more against Iraq—seemed to confirm the arrival of what was called grandly, if unwisely, the new world order. Now the expectations are being trimmed. History, including old ways and old passions of the kind that cause wars, is emerging from a half-century time warp. And the new world order looks so far like a Pax Americana, as shaky as the underpinnings of the guarantor itself have become.

Diplomats do expect to see the U.N. playing a larger and more useful role, though. It is doing so already. The question is one of degree—how far the U.N.'s writ can actually run. The East-West conflict is gone, but the North-South polarity—the gap between rich and poor—is widening. One U.N. ambassador says, "The U.N. is a more effective place now, but for whom? The real world and the U.N. have come together, and the power relationships within the place reflect that." He means, in part, that the Security Council currently operates by consensus, whereas during most of the U.N.'s life, the era of the Cold War, business was hard to transact, because any one of the Council's five permanent members—the United States, Britain, France, China, and the Soviet Union—could and did veto measures it disapproved of. The veto is rarely exercised anymore. Whatever vetoes there have been in recent years were usually cast by the United States, Britain, or France, while the great naysayers of the past had been the Soviet Union and China. Today, Moscow agrees with or goes along with Washington on most things. China is seldom in close accord with the four others, but because it wishes to avoid the appearance of being disruptive it will glumly abstain instead of vetoing uncongenial resolutions.

Still, operating by consensus doesn't necessarily simplify difficult tasks, as the just concluded search for a new Secretary-General showed. That process, an onerous one at best, is reserved to the Security Council, and in practice the so-called Perm Five make the decision. Approval of their designee by the General Assembly is a formality. In bygone days, the West's Big Three—the United States, Britain, and France—lined up behind one candidate, China and the Soviet Union behind another. After many ballots and as many vetoes, a compromise would be found. In 1981, the Big Three backed the odious Kurt Waldheim, who was seeking a third five-year term; the Soviets and the Chinese supported a Tanzanian named Salim Salim. After eighteen futile ballots, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, a Peruvian, was pushed forward and anointed, mainly because he was just a face in the crowd—a diplomat in the classic style, who was all but unknown to the five weary eminences, even though he had had some U.N. experience. Now Pérez de Cuéllar is completing his second term, having done by most accounts a creditable job—better than the Perm Five had any right to expect. Some governments, notably the French and the Soviet, wanted him to stay on for a third term, because they feared an impasse or an outcome they wouldn't like. Pérez de Cuéllar demurred, but these others thought that with a little pressure he would come around. He didn't. He is almost seventy-two, has had major heart surgery, and feels that he has earned a rest from a crushingly burdensome job.

"*So how are you doing with* your *community service?*"

The expectation of various U.N. personalities last summer was that the Perm Five would decide on a new Secretary-General in September. Pérez de Cuéllar, the thinking went, would then be told the name of his successor at the annual lunch that the Secretary-General gives on the last Friday in September for the Foreign Ministers of the Perm Five, who are always in New York then for the opening session of the General Assembly; the idea had been to give the new Secretary-General some time in which to look into and ponder the U.N.'s problems before he took control officially, on January 1st. (Washington wanted the decision made no later than October 15th.) Chief among the problems were the organization's feeble finances and what many regard as the deplorable way in which the Secretariat is staffed and organized. "As long as the U.N. had little to do, the Secretariat was well suited to its role," one of the more influential ambassadors says. "But now, with real tasks arriving, we must use what resources we have efficiently. During the Cold War, the loyalty of Secretariat officials lay elsewhere." What he meant was that it didn't really matter then that the Secretariat was top-heavy with deadwood deposited there by members according to a crude quota system that saddled the chief with far more senior officials than he needed or could use effectively.



Friday, September 27th, came and went with the Perm Five no further along in the selection process than they had been in the early summer, when there had been talk of appointing some lofty but unemployed dignitary; the names Margaret Thatcher, Jimmy Carter, and Eduard Shevardnadze were tossed about—briefly and, in the cases of Thatcher and Carter, unseriously. Shevardnadze did strike some diplomats in and out of the U.N. as being the strong and credible world figure who could do justice to the job in the post-Cold War era. But the U.N.'s unwritten rules are not to be trifled with: a Secretary-General must not come from any of the Perm Five, and he must speak one and preferably both of the U.N.'s two official working languages—English and French. So Shevardnadze's name also fell off the list, although from time to time wistful references to him were heard. "He'd have been vetoed by the French, because he doesn't speak French," a senior American diplomat said. "We probably would not have gone along, either. He is five years too early. People want more experience with the end of the Cold War and Soviet behavior." Actually, the Soviets themselves weren't interested in the idea of Shevardnadze.

The list of names grew steadily longer—much longer than in any of the past selection rituals. The African states pushed for one of their own, arguing that their continent was the only one from which a Secretary-General had not been chosen, even though Africa's fifty-one members constitute nearly a third of the entire U.N. membership, which now totals a hundred and sixty-six. In 1981, the Africans had lined up behind one candidate—Salim Salim. This time, they elected to give the Perm Five an assortment of candidates, thus making rejection of Africa's claim presumably more difficult. Acting together, they submitted an official list of six names, only two of which were taken very seriously: Boutros Boutros Ghali, Egypt's deputy Prime Minister for foreign affairs, and a very capable man, who has campaigned for the job of Secretary-General for many years; and Bernard Chidzero, the well-respected Finance Minister of Zimbabwe, who has U.N. experience. Age was a problem for Boutros Ghali; he is sixty-nine. Chidzero is sixty-four. The Perm Five were judged to be seeking someone who would serve two terms, as distinct from an aging interim figure. The four other Africans, representing Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Gabon, were all well regarded, but seemed for one reason or another to be unsuitable. Moreover, the talk within the U.N. was that, even though the six Africans constituted an agreed list, they would probably cancel one another out in behind-the-scenes skirmishing among their governments. Finally, the French warned that their threat to veto a non-French-speaking candidate was serious. Boutros Ghali speaks excellent, unaccented French, whereas most of the other Africans are Anglophone (although Zimbabwe put it about that Chidzero spoke some French, because his wife is Québécoise). Another question concerned Boutros Ghali's status as an "African": would sub-Saharan Africa, which doesn't see Egypt as part of the whole, continue to support him when the going got tough?

The prospect of an African Secretary-General had little appeal for the stalwarts of the Perm Five except for China (although France was providing pro-forma support for Boutros Ghali's bid). Actually, none of them had a candidate from any continent.

"Politicians hate the process of choosing people for jobs," a British diplomat said. "No one wants to be *demandeur*, either. It is demeaning. One leader asks another to support his candidate, and usually the other can say only that he will think about it. It is an irritant. Bush aside, most leaders don't really know much about the U.N. and how it works. They flinch from it and turn to other subjects." (Bush was the United

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States Ambassador to the U.N. for two years.)

"It is a kind of Kabuki process," an American diplomat said. "Most candidates are non-candidates or non-non-candidates, depending on the degree of sublimation of their candidacies." (He was alluding to the oblique, though intense, campaigns that were being waged by at least three candidates.) The selection process was compared by some people to an especially tricky papal election, by others to a war dance. "Three-dimensional chess"—one diplomat's characterization—may have been the most apt description. There was no agreement within the Perm Five even on the criteria that ought to govern the selection. Washington did say that it wanted a strong manager—someone who could reconcile the U.N.'s finances with its obligations and reorganize a staff of fourteen thousand people. Although London and Paris professed to want someone who could lead as well as manage, they more or less echoed Washington. So did Moscow.

"If the Americans want a good manager, they should find someone who has run a bankrupt organization," a senior figure in the Secretariat said.

"We want someone who can counterbalance the new world order," a Latin-American ambassador said, with a wink and a smile intended to equate the term with American dominance.

"There is an impasse in the Security Council between those who think the Africans should be considered first and those who want a more open process," one influential ambassador said. "They all want to build a consensus, but they have to worry that if the Africans do not have a fair go, there could be a lot of African abstentions on the vote in the G.A." The General Assembly's approval of a new Secretary-General is normally unanimous. "We are in a new era and groping."

The U.N. has always impressed some diplomats who have served there as an "Anglophone-Francophone muddle," as one of them says. I asked a French diplomat, who was making the case for choosing an African, whether France would support an Anglophone African candidate. "Well, we feel he should be able to express himself in both working languages" was the reply. "He would be handicapped if he didn't speak French."

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official expressed strong doubt that any of the African candidates, if chosen, would pursue serious reform of the U.N. But he also doubted whether an African would be chosen. The Africans "did it to themselves," he said. "Instead of naming the most qualified person, they insisted it was their turn." He did concede that Zimbabwe "had done it the right way by saying that Chidzero was not an African candidate but the most qualified man that Zimbabwe could propose." This official then advanced his opinion that "as of today, I think most of these candidates will be blown away and someone from the netherworld will appear and get the job."

That day, perhaps significantly, was Monday, October 28th—the very day when the Bush Administration's candidate for the job of running the U.N., Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, was himself blown off the field in a windstorm of ridicule at home. Mulroney's government is considered the most unpopular in Canada's modern history; polling data this summer placed popular support for the government at twelve per cent. With an election to fight in 1993 and prospects far from good, Mulroney seems to have sought a graceful exit from the rigors of Canadian politics. In a conversation with George Bush in Toronto last July, he raised the question of succeeding Pérez de Cuéllar. The two discussed it again at Kennebunkport in August. Bush must have warmed to the idea, because Mulroney became the one and only American candidate. But the secrecy concealing Bush's choice was immaculate; rumors of the Mulroney candidacy didn't surface at U.N. Plaza until the beginning of October, even though gossip and speculation about the identity of Pérez de Cuéllar's successor had been Topic A there since the early summer. Because the rumors originated in Washington, they had a solid ring to them. A shock wave, mingled in some places with dismay and incredulity, went through the U.N. community. "The Canadians here were taken by surprise," one U.N. official says. Mulroney struck some U.N. people as inappropriate because he wasn't a Third World figure. Others—a great many others, in fact—thought he was all wrong because he is widely held in low esteem. "We could hardly do worse than Brian Mulroney," one senior diplomat said. The more muted but perhaps gravest concern was that Mulroney, a used-up politician, would be beholden to George Bush, a kindred spirit, who could manipulate him if he chose to. Still, Mulroney had obvious advantages. The Soviets would probably go along with Bush; so would the British, who, in any case, could scarcely oppose a prominent Commonwealth figure. France, too, would be unlikely to oppose a Bush favorite who spoke good French, as Mulroney does.

As the balloting drew near, Canadian spokespersons were asked about the Mulroney candidacy. One of them says now, "Our line was always that Prime Minister Mulroney is flattered, but he is not a candidate." A straw poll was held on Friday, October 25th. It resembled a beauty contest, except that the judges—in this case, the five permanent and ten non-permanent Council members—could vote for as many candidates as they liked. Not surprisingly, Boutros Ghali and Bernard Chidzero, the African front-runners, took an early lead; each received nine votes. Mulroney drew five votes, placing him in the middle of the pack of fourteen candidates. Four of his five votes were believed to have come from the United States and three other members of the Perm Five: Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Over the previous weekend, according to a piece in the Toronto *Globe & Mail*, Mulroney had received "encouragement . . . from friends in high places in Washington, London, and Paris as he phoned around . . . and asked about his chances."

In Canada, Mulroney's political enemies and the press were raising questions. As Prime Minister, with his country confronting a unity crisis and his government in trouble, he had maneuvered himself into an awkward spot. Was he about to become a lame-duck leader? Later on Friday, an official spokesman in Ottawa said that Mulroney had instructed Canada's Ambassador to the U.N., Yves Fortier, to withdraw his name. But when asked whether Mulroney was saying that he didn't want the job, the spokesman was in deep water: "In all honesty, I don't know. . . . In terms of what happens next, it depends on what the Security Council does. We'll have to play it step

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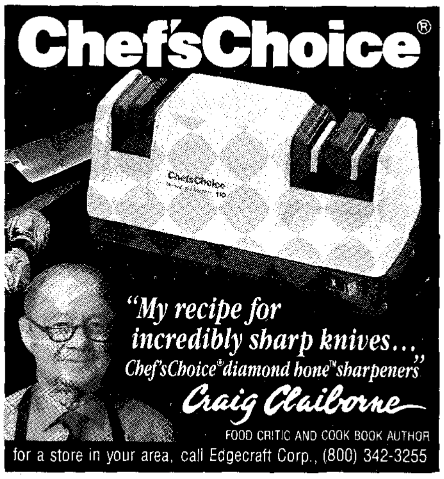

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by step." Mulroney was running hard but pretending not to run.

On Saturday, the *Globe & Mail* quoted Ambassador Fortier as saying that Mulroney was "definitely not a candidate for the job," and adding, "He's not going to the party even if they send another invitation." Fortier was further reported as saying that he had been instructed by Mulroney to find out whether his name could be withdrawn. After consulting several members of the Security Council, Fortier said, he found that it was impossible to keep a name from going forward even if the person in question didn't want the job. But the same story cited French Ambassador Jean-Bernard Merimée as saying later in the day that none of the fourteen candidates had asked to have his or her name withdrawn even though it was possible to do so.

At home, Mulroney stood accused of staging a phony withdrawal. His equivocal position dominated Canada's news over that weekend, which he spent, according to a *Globe & Mail* piece on Monday, discussing "his candidacy" with Fortier and other advisers. "Despite the latest denials of interest in the job, Mr. Mulroney has not officially informed Security Council President Chinmaya Gharekhan that he would refuse a draft, U.N. diplomats note," the story continued. On that same day, just as Mulroney was about to become a figure of fun, he at last pulled back, citing domestic responsibilities. "I am not prepared to have my name stand for, or to serve as, Secretary-General of the United Nations," he said in a brief Shermanesque statement. And he instructed Fortier to thank members of the Security Council for their "generous and unsolicited" support.

Mulroney's *brutta figura* left Bush without a candidate and the Security Council stuck fast. Although two Africans had shown a lot of early speed, few, if any, insiders reckoned that they could stay the course, mainly because the Americans and the Soviets were unlikely to support either one. "The Americans regard Boutros as being over the hill, Chidzero as too narrow," one senior U.N. official said. "The Soviets also have real doubts about the Africans, and think they will pursue their own agenda. There is a tendency among the Soviets, as there is in Washington, to equate Africans generally with countries like Zaire, Kenya, and the Sudan. They"—Americans and Soviets—"don't want to have to choose from the Africans."

The sub-Saharan Africans were angry at everyone, especially Egypt, which they saw, along with its candidate, Boutros Ghali, as belonging to "Arab Africa," not at all the same place. (Boutros Ghali is actually a Coptic Christian with a Jewish wife and with more than a little European style.) The French, according to one U.N. ambassador, asked Senegal's widely respected President, Abdou Diouf, to resign and become a candidate. He declined. Since the prospects of all or most of the candidates, apart from Chidzero and Boutros Ghali, seemed for one reason or another to be unpromising, many handicappers felt that some undeclared figure would be shoved forward and approved: there was, after all, plenty of precedent for such an outcome.

The non-African candidates on the informal list were a sprinkling of Asians and Europeans, diplomats and political leaders. Of these, the most widely discussed and seemingly best positioned was Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the uncle of the current Aga Khan, and a former U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees; he is fifty-nine and directs relief activities in the Persian Gulf region. Sadruddin is the pluperfect international figure, having been born in Paris of Iranian parents, educated at Harvard, and equipped with multiple passports and residence in Switzerland. Besides being a fixture at the U.N., he is said to be a friend of George Bush, with whom he occasionally plays tennis. Sadruddin was judged to appeal to those among the Perm Five who were reluctant to choose an African but would place confidence in an Asian who had a strong Western background and good Western connections. Some among those who have known and worked with Sadruddin say that he is competent and likable, but "no heavyweight," as one of them put it. He actually began campaigning for the job twenty-one years ago—when Waldheim was first elected.

Sadruddin, like Mulroney, drew just five votes in the October 25th straw poll, and none of the other Asians or the Europeans broke clear from the pack in the early straw votes. Threats of China's vetoing a non-African and of France's vetoing a non-French speaker hung over the proceedings, which, given the amount of time that Security Council members had had to think about and consult on the affair, had a strangely measured quality. Members allowed themselves only affirmative votes in the early straw votes; a no

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The nights have grown cool again, like the nights
of early spring, and quiet again. Will
speech disturb you? We're
alone now; we have no reason for silence.

Can you see, over the garden—the full moon rises.
I won't see the next full moon.

In spring, when the moon rose, it meant
time was endless. Snowdrops
opened and closed, the clustered
seeds of the maples fell in pale drifts.
White over white, the moon rose over the birch tree.
And in the crook, where the tree divides,
leaves of the first daffodils, in moonlight
soft greenish-silver.

We have come too far together toward the end now
to fear the end. These nights, I am no longer even certain
I know what the end means. And you, who've been with a man—

after the first cries,
doesn't joy, like fear, make no sound?

—Louise Glück

• •

vote, if it came from within the Perm Five, would, of course, have pointed to a veto when the voting became formal. "Nobody wants a dingdong," a British diplomat said. "No one wants to say no to anyone," a colleague of his echoed. "Everyone wants to avoid slipping back into the contentious, confrontational pattern of before."

By the second week of November, members had agreed that negative votes could be cast—anonymously and, as before, informally. The first such ballot occurred on Monday, November 11th, and Boutros Ghali got eleven yes votes, Chidzero ten. (Members could still vote for as many of the candidates on the list as they chose to.) Three members abstained from voting on Boutros Ghali, and one no vote was cast. Chidzero also drew three abstentions, but he had two no votes cast against him.

The next day, a senior U.N. official said, "We will know today. If Boutros doesn't get it today, there will be an impasse." The official was wrong. By the next day, the procedure had tightened; the Council agreed, after three hours of discussion, that Perm Five representatives would vote with blue ballots, the others with white ballots. Thus, any no vote cast against a candidate on a blue ballot would seem to mean that he or she would confront a veto in the formal voting.

In the balloting that same day, November 12th, Chidzero moved one vote ahead of Boutros Ghali—eleven to ten. Chidzero drew three abstentions and one no vote. Boutros Ghali collected three abstentions and two negative votes. None of the negative votes in either case came from within the Perm Five. And even though three of Boutros Ghali's supporting votes did come from Perm Five members, compared with just two from there for Chidzero, the momentum was judged to have shifted behind Chidzero. The French, although committed to Boutros Ghali, indicated that they would not oppose Chidzero. Britain supported him, and China voted for both men. The Soviets voted for Boutros Ghali, owing to a hasty and, according to some, ill-considered commitment by Mikhail Gorbachev to Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, who seemed to be lobbying a largish part of the world community on behalf of his candidate. The United States, bending toward experience and relations with Egypt, voted for Boutros Ghali, although without enthusiasm.

The more rigorous procedure had helped only in the sense that it was now certain that one of two African candidates was going to win. Or so it seemed. Diplomats and officials asked themselves how it could be otherwise. The state of play was roughly as follows: The Americans or the Soviets or both might contemplate a veto, but the rest of the Perm Five would not support any such move. And it seemed most unlikely that either the United States or the Soviet Union would invite the certain wrath of the Africans and their supporters by doing so. Bush would presumably have to think about the impact of an American veto of an African on the black vote at home.

The American position struck many of those who observed it as curiously passive. "Bush pushed a candidate—Mulroney—and it didn't work," one U.N. ambassador said. "So exhaustion set in, and Washington said to itself, 'We can live with either of them.'"

A part of the U.N. community blamed Washington for the inaction that followed the balloting of November 12th. The American delegation appeared to be uninstructed—an obstacle to movement. Numerous others blamed the so-called nonaligned bloc. "It's both ironic and amusing," one senior U.N. official said. "These people"—the nonaligned—"always complain when the Americans do take charge, and now they are squirming and saying privately, 'Why is the United States putting us in this position?' They don't want to decide. They want the U.S. to decide. But the U.S. would be crazy to get into the middle of this. It has a lot at stake with Egypt, but Boutros looks to Washington like warmed-over Pérez de Cuéllar."

The French wanted the matter put to rest no later than Friday, November 22nd. A first sign of renewal appeared on Wednesday, the twentieth; the Council agreed then to hold its first formal vote at 4 P.M. the following day. It further agreed that any candidate who drew nine or more votes without, of course, a no vote from one of the Perm Five would carry the day. If the voting failed to turn up a winner, another and presumably final vote would be held on Friday, during which the

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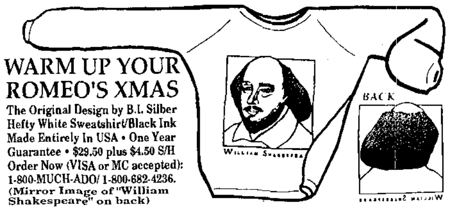
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names of new candidates could be considered.

The issue still seemed deadlocked. "This is an unprecedented situation," one of the Asian ambassadors said. "It's the first time the U.N. has had not one but two candidates who have not been vetoed by any member of the Perm Five."

Various members of the U.N.'s Secretariat were far from convinced that an African would be allowed to win. "The cynical view is that it's all a game," one of them observed. "Everyone is waiting for the real candidate's name to be put forward. But the Perm Five haven't figured out how to get out of the trap."

"I don't see how you can veto an African now after not vetoing before," an American diplomat said. "But it could happen. The problem now is the Africans—whether they refuse to make a choice. Each of them"—Chidzero and Boutros Ghali—"has eight solid votes in the Council."

The sub-Saharan Africans were expected by some diplomats to stick together, but even on the eve of the formal vote their attitude seemed to blend inflexibility with illusion. One of the key African ambassadors, for example, disagreed that the field had narrowed to two candidates, and he also rejected charges of African disunity. "There is absolute unity within the African group," he told me. "We are united behind the six African candidates. The others should not put the burden of choosing on us. And if they refuse to choose an African, we will take it very seriously. They want, as always, to divide and rule—to break down African unity." And he said again, "They should not put the burden on us." (For "they," one should read "the Americans.")

The outcome of the vote on Thursday the twenty-first came as a surprise—at least to the people whom I spoke with—first because it produced a winner, second because the winner was Boutros Ghali. The expectation had been that no one would win on Thursday or perhaps even on Friday. "I was very surprised," one Perm Five ambassador said. "I was particularly surprised by the sudden drop in the support for Chidzero." I asked whether the outcome should have been so unexpected, once it became known within the Council that the United States, a swing vote, had supported Boutros Ghali in the straw vote on November 12th. (Insiders could more or less distinguish the American position from those of the other Perm Five members once the votes were tallied.) He agreed that the American position was pivotal and probably inevitable. "The Madrid factor was greatly underestimated," he said. "That was crucial." He was referring to the recent American-sponsored conference in Madrid on launching peace negotiations in the Middle East and to Egypt's role in this process.

Although sub-Saharan Africans would have preferred one of their own, they expressed some satisfaction with the outcome; Boutros Ghali knows African affairs intimately, and has close personal relations with many African leaders. The Americans had wanted a younger figure—one who would serve two terms and thereby be able both to undertake and to carry out reforms of the U.N. structure. But the Administration did nothing to promote or support such a figure after it lost Mulroney.

In campaigning for the job, Boutros Ghali convinced numerous people that he is the apostle of reform that the Perm Five have said they want. Pérez de Cuéllar, by contrast, was not interested in management and was never persuaded of the need for reforms. The consensus view within the Perm Five and among other key Council members is that the number of senior officials reporting directly to the Secretary-General should be cut from about three dozen to no more than four. And none of these four should represent a Perm Five member. "None of the top jobs should belong to any country," one Perm Five ambassador says.

Boutros Ghali has indicated that he will serve no more than one term. If so, it may be, as some diplomats are saying, that he will be able to take on the painful burden of launching reforms—of denying numerous members the patronage they now enjoy—and thereby allow his successor to complete the process of reform in a less stressful environment.

Some members of the Secretariat say that reforms will come no matter who is running the show, for the same reason that the Security Council is now functional—the Cold War is over, and the big powers agree. But the question arises: If the powers that matter most are in agreement, will they jointly curtail the scope and authority of the Secretary-General? Most members think (or hope) not. "In the Cold War days, there was always the fear of the S.G.'s being chopped off at the knees by a superpower," one Asian diplomat says. "No more. Now everyone expects a wide range of independent diplomacy from him."

ALTHOUGH kaleidoscopic change did release the U.N. from the hobbles of the Cold War, another set of constraints emerged, the first of which lies within the Charter itself. Its provisions were intended mainly to prevent another world war; that is, to head off aggression by one state against another, if only to forestall a wider conflict. However, the Charter forbade the U.N. to intercede in a member state's internal affairs, and it normally does so only if invited. The Charter's intent was briefly vindicated by Saddam Hussein's seizure of Kuwait, but the sources of most of the conflict and potential conflict that we worry about today lie within national borders rather than across them. Leaders of some of this century's jerry-built countries find that feeding people and planting democratic institutions are far more difficult than inciting ethnic or tribal or religious fervor. And the danger that internal conflict will spread beyond frontiers remains, as in the case of Yugoslavia. Shadows of the past threaten the Balkans, and perhaps most of Eastern Europe, and the U.N. can do nothing. It did agree in September to embargo arms shipments to Yugoslavia, but the gesture was meaningless. By then, the arms entering Yugoslavia were being supplied by dealers operating illegally, and not by governments.

Elsewhere, various governments and disputing parties have invited (or agreed to allow) the U.N. to help settle localized disputes. Just this year, four peacekeeping or peacemaking projects were agreed to or begun: in El Salvador, in Angola, in the Western Sahara, and in Cambodia. Also, the U.N., if only because of the universality of its membership, is taking on problems that were never envisioned by the Charter, notably drugs and the environment. Devising arrangements for refugee problems—old and new—is becoming yet another of its burden-

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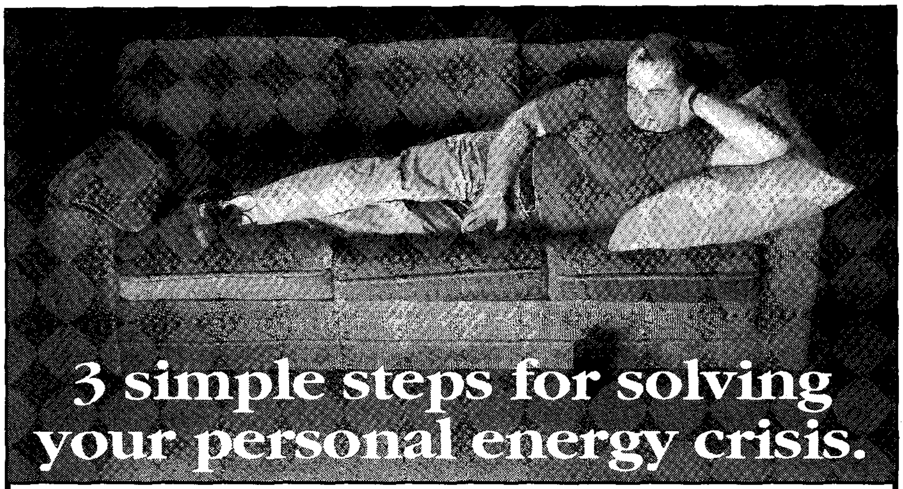

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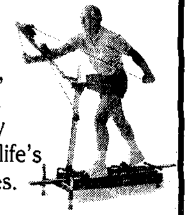

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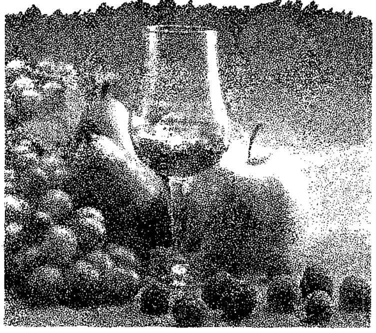

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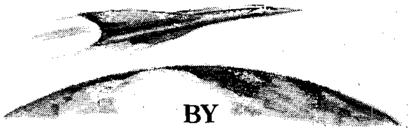

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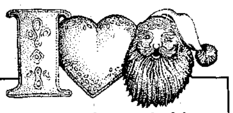

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some tasks. “Herculean” may actually be a more descriptive word than “burdensome,” given the U.N.’s rapidly shrinking financial base and its expanding list of activities. Although members expect their world organization to live up to its responsibilities, most governments are at most times delinquent in their annual and assessed obligations. “The U.N. is like an old airplane that is suddenly being asked to fly polar routes and can’t,” one of the Latin-American ambassadors says.

On September 16th, Pérez de Cuéllar wrote a letter to the Foreign Ministers of the U.N.’s member countries in which he contrasted its growing role and its depleted resources, and presented what he called “a stark alternative.” The letter said, in part, “Either we manage effectively to address the financial problem, or the United Nations will be rendered incapable . . . to perform its far-reaching functions . . . especially for the maintenance of peace and security.”

Experienced U.N. officials accuse the dominant world powers of not seeing, or wanting to see, the gap between programs and resources. “The Secretary-General is in despair,” one of them says. “You don’t make commitments for the U.N. without looking at its resources. There is zero growth in the big countries—the ones that blithely expand the U.N.’s responsibilities, even though we may lack the means to meet next month’s payroll.”

This official and others are now thinking mainly about the Cambodian project; its financial implications defy comprehension, they say. First, the U.N. must secure the ceasefire while also arranging for the return to Cambodia of some three hundred and fifty thousand refugees who are living in camps across the Thai border; it would be the most complicated refugee repatriation in modern history, even if heavily armed guerrilla forces of the Khmer Rouge were not intimidating the refugees—trying to force them into areas of the country which the Khmer Rouge controls. Then, there is a still larger, five-part task: separating the contesting armies and gathering them into designated cantonments; monitoring the ceasefire, which will require a U.N. force of at least ten thousand; arranging free elections, a process that will require voter registration and a lot of supervision and could take two years to complete; providing civil administrators during this period, which means another ten thousand or so people; and reconstructing a shattered country—a job that will absorb much of the available funding. The cost estimate of this entire operation which has been waved around U.N. headquarters and in key capitals is a billion dollars. America’s assessed contribution to such projects is thirty per cent, and in September, when President Bush addressed the U.N., Pérez de Cuéllar told him that the American contribution to the Cambodian settlement could be three hundred million dollars. Bush flinched, according to one account. Yet a billion dollars is a deliberately lowball number, and is aimed at softening the reality. The State Department’s working-level estimate of the actual cost is two to five billion dollars, not counting the reconstruction cost. A member of the Bush Administration recently asked a U.N. official what the real estimate was, and he was told, “Two billion dollars and up.”

The U.N. wants two hundred million dollars right now to begin its Cambodian operation. “We have no idea where the money is coming from,” an Administration official says. He seemed to be thinking about both the initial two hundred million and the huge costs to follow.

All the laudable tasks being taken on by the U.N. add to the burden of members at a time when the world’s capital base is shrinking. The project in Angola, for example, is in many ways similar to the one in Cambodia, although the scale is smaller. Still, it can be and is argued that assessed contributions to these projects may be far less costly to members than the alternatives—persistent conflict and instability. The United States’ assessment of thirty per cent is the largest of any member nation’s, but many diplomats feel that the putative world constable is getting a bargain, since the alternative in some bad situations might be a hundred per cent. Also, the Cambodian peace agreement was immediately useful to Washington, because it silenced critical comment from the press about American support for Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge despot. Yet one U.N. functionary worries half seriously that because the war in the Persian Gulf cost the United States nothing (other countries having paid the bill) Washington may conclude that peacekeeping projects are too expensive.

Pérez de Cuéllar, in his letter to the Foreign Ministers on September 16th, noted that in 1991 only ten countries were in full compliance with U.N. financial regulations, which require payment of regular contributions in January of the calendar year. As of September 16th, he wrote, forty-one other members had caught up and paid in full. Among the Perm Five, only the United States fell into a category marked "paid something towards arrears in 1991"; the reference was to prior years' arrears. The United States has paid two hundred and twenty-three million dollars this year, whittling down its aggregate arrearages to about a third of a billion—far and away the largest of any member.

On October 24th, Pérez de Cuéllar issued a financial report—actually a cri de coeur—in which he used terms like "brink of insolvency" and "imminent bankruptcy" to describe the situation. He might have noted, but didn't, that the U.N. can't even afford to destroy the so-called weapons of mass destruction that it finds in Iraq.

I asked a senior U.N. official how the organization managed to totter along. "We have been dipping into reserves, but these are now depleted," he said. "We borrow from Peter to pay Paul. When we run out of money at the end of the year, we ask some governments to advance their annual contributions." He was referring mainly to the Scandinavian governments and Canada. "We perform a juggling act, but we are running out of balls."

"The U.N.'s situation is pathetic," one experienced European ambassador says. "The Secretary-General doesn't have an airplane, and must beg for one when he goes somewhere." A colleague of the ambassador's told me that the U.N. could not even plan to replace aging cars. Within the Secretariat, various remedies, some more notional than others, are being worked up, including a proposal to create a privately funded endowment for the U.N. Whether the money to cover start-up costs for the Cambodian project will be available isn't clear. A State Department official who was asked about it said, "You almost think that something like the Cambodian settlement shouldn't happen, because of the Procrustean bed we're in with the budget. We don't have the money for so many things. It is a zero-sum game. If you spend money on one thing, you have to snatch it from something else." Diplomats in Washington and other capitals and in New York see the United States as beginning to pull back from its global role—not in order to deal more seriously with the domestic agenda but in large part because of the financial bind and in part because the Cold War is over. As for enabling the U.N. to do what perhaps only it can do, big governments will have to think more realistically about the price of peacemaking and peacekeeping. Most of them meet or try to meet peacekeeping assessments with funds drawn from hard-pressed foreign-ministry budgets. In Washington and London, and perhaps elsewhere, some diplomats are arguing now that this money should instead come out of military budgets, since their governments no longer have the Cold War to contend with.

Third World countries are watching closely. Most of them belong to the nonaligned movement, and their influence is far less now than it was when the superpowers competed for their support; there is no longer a fundamental conflict with which to be nonaligned. But diplomats from these struggling countries continue to point up the risks to everyone of "taking poverty off the table," because the high costs of peacemaking seem to squeeze out funds for economic development. "Free elections without economic progress are useless" is a comment one hears from Third World ambassadors to the U.N. Also, with environmental issues moving up the agenda and a U.N.-sponsored international conference on these issues scheduled for next June, Third World diplomats are being instructed to say, "You big industrialized powers have fouled the environment. So you provide the funds and the technology that will allow us to take a different path toward industrial progress."

IF there is an issue that worries the Perm Five as much as budgetary pressure, it is their club itself—whether it should be altered or enlarged. The arguments for changing the Security Council run as follows: The Perm Five membership is a relic of the Second World War; Britain and France are no longer world powers; Japan and

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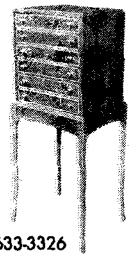

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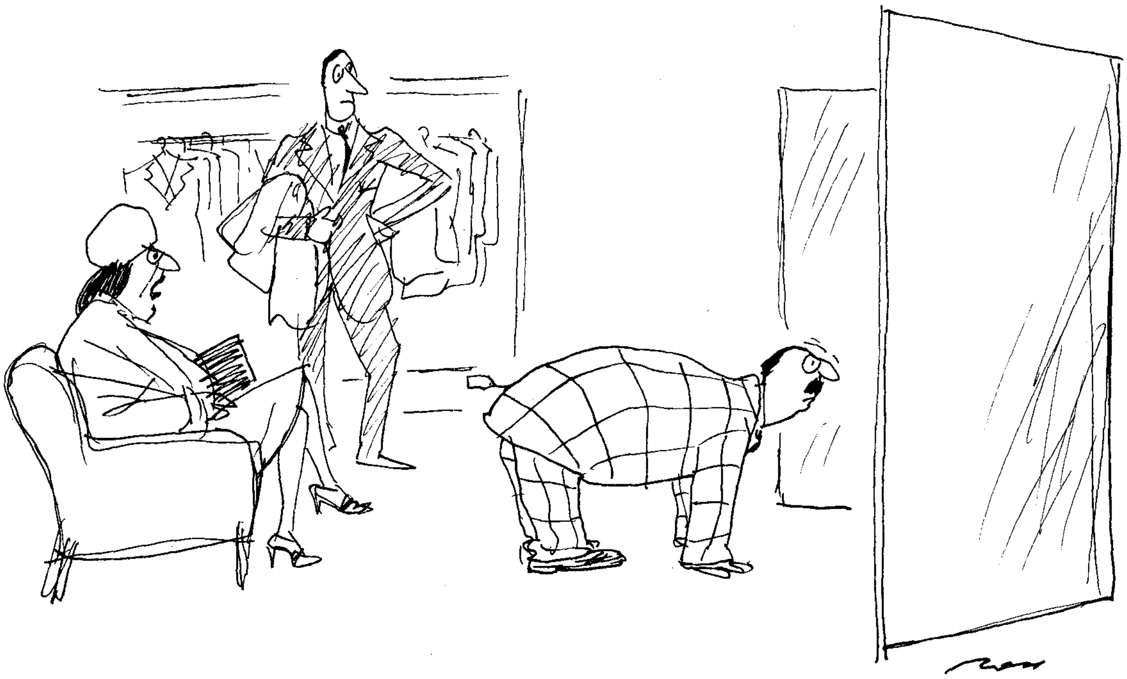

"Now let's see it on two."

• •

Germany are second only to the United States as economic powers, and are a good deal better off; if the Soviet Union splits into loosely connected pieces, most of them dependent on outside help, why should one of the parts retain a permanent seat on the Council? Also, the argument continues, the only representative of the developing countries on the Perm Five is China, whose regime is widely disapproved of and distrusted, and is more than capable of playing the rogue.

For twenty years or so, Washington has had, or has professed to have, sympathy for the Japanese claim to a seat but has never helped Japan to devise a tactical approach to that goal. One such approach that attracts some aspirant candidates would mean adding five new permanent members: Japan, Germany, Brazil, India, and Nigeria. Unlike the current permanent membership, no member of that group would possess the veto—a power that is *mal vu* within most of the U.N.'s membership. "The veto is dirty stuff, so you can't want it if you don't have it," an American diplomat says. Like most diplomats representing the Perm Five members, he opposes enlarging the Council. If you double the number of permanent members, the diplomats say, you would have to double the number of nonpermanent members—those who have two-year rotational tours. The Security Council is unwieldy and hard to operate with fifteen members; with thirty, opponents of enlargement say, it would become dysfunctional.

"Japan sees itself as a cow being milked by others," a senior U.N. official says. The Japanese do indeed complain about taxation without participation, and they do feel that a seat that should be theirs is being denied them. Still, their position isn't entirely clear. Japanese diplomats and officials do not speak with one voice, whether the issue is a seat on the Security Council or how to deal with U.N. pressure on Japan to contribute more than its regular assessed share—twelve per cent—to the Cambodian operation. During the summer of 1990, for example, the Japanese were "very demonstrative," one Western diplomat says. "They wanted to be part of this non-vetoing bloc of permanent members that people talk about. Then they faded into the background. It may involve not wanting to pay a price—not wanting to be forced to come down on one side or another of world issues. Their government is not well structured for that. Various ministries, like Trade and Finance, have virtual autonomy. They can paralyze a government. We haven't heard from either of them in nearly a year."

Events since the summer of 1990 have, of course, included the crisis and war in the Persian Gulf—an experience that Japan, although it is dependent on Gulf oil, had no interest in sharing. Also, Tokyo is caught up in a bruising political debate over whether Japan's Self-Defense Forces can be sent abroad to take part in peacekeeping operations. The question, then, is whether Japan's preference for keeping a low-to-modest profile on the world political scene is stronger than its sense of entitlement to permanent membership on the Security Council. The feeling around the U.N. is that Japan will push to have a place at the top table, but not at the moment. Obtaining that place would instantly put Japan in the larger role that it has shunned. And Japan begins a two-year term on the Council in January. The push is expected to come when its term is concluded and the U.N. approaches its fiftieth anniversary, in 1995.

Germany is more relaxed than Japan about not being at the top table, but in a larger sense its attitude is more complicated. "Europe is overrepresented," a German diplomat says. "It has two of the Perm Five and two nonpermanent members, who rotate. But the Council doesn't reflect Europe's real power structure. We Germans will not push the matter—unless Japan gets a seat. Then we will want one, especially if the European Community fails politically. We will be silent otherwise, provided that Britain and France are prepared to Europeanize their seats. They must exercise their role on the Security Council through the E.C.—by consulting with all members, especially us. We and the other Europeans were not consulted about the Cambodia initiative." He could also have noted that Germany's annual assessed contribution to the U.N. is considerably larger than either France's or Britain's.

The Chinese are described by U.N. diplomats as being, in general, unable or unwilling to take a clear position on the enlargement of the Security Council, because of a struggle between their

Old Guard and tough-minded younger people. The Old Guard wants to avoid offending the nonaligned countries, which would like to see the Council enlarged; the younger crowd sees the nonaligned movement as dead, and mainly wants to discourage Japan's chances for a permanent place on the Council. For now, China is rocking no boats.

The Soviet seat may become the most disconcerting question and the source of the greatest pressure to change the Security Council. Soviet officials have said that if the breakaway republics apply for individual membership in the U.N. Moscow will support them. Their taking that line, diplomats say, will make an issue of the legitimacy of the Soviet seat on the Council. It won't be an easy issue for the West's Big Three, who, again, want above all to avoid opening the Charter to revision. Who fills the Soviet seat, diplomats ask. One of them, a senior British diplomat, calls the current Soviet position "bizarre" but adds, "Their Perm Five role is all the Soviets can handle now in foreign policy. And it saves their face." An American colleague, reflecting the general caution, says, "We won't consider the question until the Soviets are able to define their relationship with the republics. Right now, we are trying to develop a policy for dealing with the republics on foreign policy and on the nuclear weapons on their territory."

Like the Soviet Union, or what remains of it, Britain and France have an enormous stake in the status quo. "The Council is the best vehicle for our foreign-policy goals, as it is for France's," a highly experienced British diplomat says. "And we are both vulnerable." British and French diplomats take the same line: we see the logic of Japan's claim; the world's second-largest economic power might expect to have a world role, but economic power isn't the only criterion; the Gulf crisis showed that Japan and Germany were just not equipped for world roles. These diplomats then distinguish their own nations' military attributes and positions of some influence in various parts of the world from the more modest outreach of both Japan and Germany. The French and the British also take essentially the same position on the related question of blending their two seats on the Council into one E.C. seat. "Foreign policy includes common-defense policy, and there is no common defense in the E.C.," a senior French diplomat says. "Just think of what would have happened if Europe had had a common policy in the Gulf crisis. But as Europe moves on, one can perhaps envision a permanent European seat." Various Western European diplomats who are neither British nor French argue that, since the E.C. is integrating, it should replace the disintegrating Soviet Union on the Council.

So far, America's opposition to enlargement, or to revision of the Charter in any way, is as stiff as that of any of the four other permanent members. "The Americans don't want to risk losing the veto," a senior British diplomat says. Still, the peremptory nature of the Bush Administration's attitude toward revising the Charter is rather surprising; the pressure for revision in some form may become too heavy to resist. "We see no possibility of amending the Charter," one official in Washington says flatly. "And we see good reasons not to change it. First, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. And if you want to have effective peacekeeping operations it would be better not to change it. Remember, the Perm Five are the only countries that acknowledge openly their possession of nuclear weapons." His point seemed to be that membership in the so-called nuclear club was a key, perhaps *the* key, credential for joining the U.N.'s élite, even though events have cheapened the political value of nuclear weapons, and former adversaries are working together to discourage spreading them around. Asked if this criterion for a seat on the Security Council might give some countries an incentive to acquire nuclear weapons, the official simply restated his point: "We want as permanent members those who can project power, which nuclear weapons let you do. The Nigerians, the Japanese, the Germans, and the others can't do that. If the Indians want to acknowledge possession . . ." He shrugged.

Advocates of change confront a Catch-22. The Security Council cannot be changed unless the Perm Five—in effect, the Council itself—approve a revision of the Charter. Nonetheless, experienced diplomats and U.N. personalities agree that change is un-

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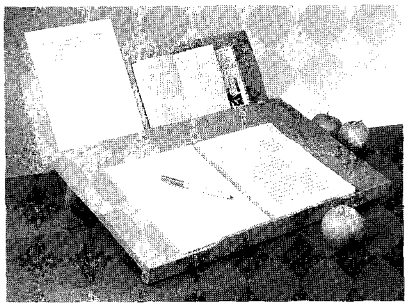

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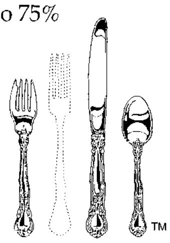

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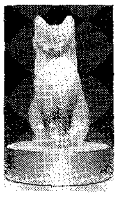
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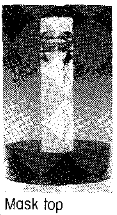
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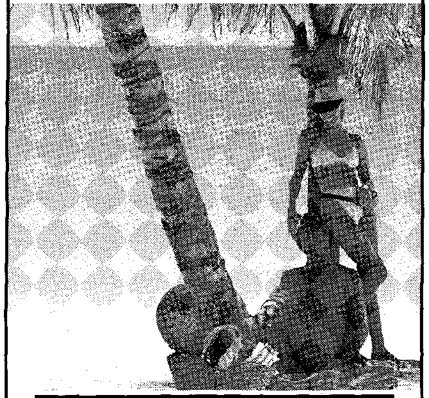

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avoidable. "The argument that pits Japan, India, Brazil, and Nigeria against the Perm Five is under way, though muted," a British diplomat concedes. Views diverge on which of the Perm Five will give way first. Some say the United States and the Soviet Union will accept change when they decide that provoking the British, the French, and the Chinese is less painful than resisting the pressure for Charter revision. Others believe that Britain and France will preëmpt their colleagues by proposing that Japan, and only Japan, be added to the Council. The Japan-only scenario obviously troubles the larger part of the U.N.'s membership, and also the Secretariat. An official there says, "It makes sense to add Brazil, India, and Nigeria to the Council instead of, say, Zimbabwe, which has no role. These big regional powers would provide some balance to the Perm Five." Other officials and various diplomats are more explicit. "The Third World has been marginalized and neglected," one of them says. "It sees America as hijacking the U.N., now that the Soviet Union is no longer a factor." This line is pushed most harshly by the Latin-American bloc, which, unlike either the Asians or the Africans, actually has some cohesion. One former U.N. official likes to remind Americans that during the Dumbarton Oaks conference, in 1944, when the U.N. Charter was being roughed out, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was urging permanent Council membership for Brazil. The British and the Soviets, it seems, rejected that idea.

As for Japan and Germany, "they grumble, but do so discreetly," one of the more influential U.N. ambassadors says. He and others see the grumbling as the beginning of pressure from Tokyo and Bonn to acquire a political status that matches the weight of their financial contributions. "The linkage is implicit and in the air," this ambassador says. "A serious push for Charter revision is expected before the fiftieth anniversary. It could be very divisive. The questions are being asked now. 'What are the criteria for permanent membership? Is it wealth? Why not Japan and Germany? Is it size? Why not India, Brazil, and Nigeria?' "

The pace of integration within the E.C. could influence the timing for Charter revision. A fairly popular scenario, or design, would have the E.C. and Japan replacing Britain and France as members of the Perm Five, with India, Brazil, and Nigeria also becoming permanent members, but without veto power. There are other scenarios. The question isn't what, exactly, will happen to the Security Council but when it will happen. "If not by 1995, then surely by the year 2000" is an answer that one hears from experienced but cautious people. And, as some of them point out, there is precedent for change: in August of 1965, the Charter *was* revised, to increase the nonpermanent membership of the Security Council from six to ten.

THE very problems facing the U.N.—the multitude of those which lie within national boundaries—will create pressure to authorize intervention. "Borders have become artificial," one of the European ambassadors observes. "They follow river valleys and mountain ridges, not ethnic frontiers." The Kurdish problem offers an example. The sponsors of the U.N.'s resolution last April to help the Kurds argued successfully that the problem was "cross-border" in nature, because these people were fleeing from Iraqi forces and taking refuge in countries—Iran and Turkey—that didn't want them. All of what has been done in or to Iraq under U.N. auspices was intended to contain or weaken Saddam Hussein. But, without disputing Saddam's baneful influence, India, Brazil, and other developing countries see the actions against him as a disturbing precedent—as outright intervention in one member's internal affairs. The stiffest resistance to revising the Charter to allow for such intervention will be put up by developing countries; for them, the inviolability of a member's internal affairs is sacred. They regard what has occurred in Iraq since the seizure of Kuwait in August of 1990 as a direct threat to the U.N.'s political culture. "Nothing can justify the right of interference," says one of the senior and most highly respected of the U.N. ambassadors from Latin America.

The pressures on the Perm Five to intervene in local disputes are likely to be most acute in Europe, where the risks of contagion—of outbreaks spreading beyond frontiers—seem to be highest. Since self-determination lies at the heart of most outbreaks, Washington and other key capitals will increasingly confront the question of when this principle is a good thing and when it is a bad thing, and they won't always agree. No one opposed self-determination for Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, but the same cannot be said for the demands of Slovakia, Moldavia, and Croatia to go their own way. The list of potential breakaway regions, republics, and provinces is a long one. The case that independence will improve the commonweal will be strong in some instances, weak in others. Yet the breakaway impulse will be equally intense in all.

"Local conflicts that threaten peace and security must be dealt with," one of the European ambassadors says. "Otherwise, the U.N. will not be seen as relevant. But we must move cautiously. We have to strike a balance between sovereignty and stability." He and others talk about "preventive diplomacy." The new Secretary-General, they say, must put this high on his list of priorities. "There is a lot of difference between a fact-finding mission and sending ten thousand blue helmets," he said.

Many, if not most, of these conversations have a circular quality. They begin with talk of Charter revision or the budgetary straitjacket and end with grim admonitions that the world's direst need is some redistribution of wealth—finding a means of narrowing the gap between North and South. But first the wealth must be created; the prospect of so-called sustained growth is rejected as a "bad oxymoron" by one World Bank economist.

As the presumed plinth of whatever new world order does develop, the United States is judged to need a far more coherent policy toward the U.N. Its attitude throughout the nineteen-eighties and, indeed, most of the Cold War wandered across a spectrum of skepticism (much of it understandable), ambivalence, and outright hostility. Washington talks now about reform of the organization but can't decide on how much reform. "It's reminiscent of 1969, when the issue was putting the U.N. flag on the moon along with the American flag," one diplomat recalls. A working group within the United States bureaucracy recommended planting both flags, he says, "but in the end it had to be an American show."

George Bush is said to have a better feel for the U.N. than any of his predecessors in the White House. His

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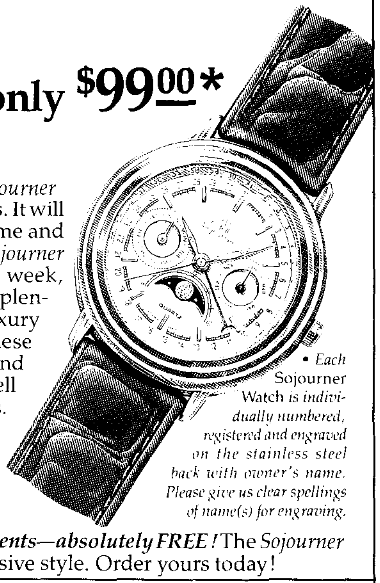

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sympathy for its financial misery covers a willingness to liquidate his government's arrears; but he is squeezed, and, in any case, the Senate Appropriations Committee won't approve a repayment schedule that would help much. In fact, there is no schedule as such, only an Administration commitment to pay what's owed in four installments. Still, as a senior British diplomat says, "at least it's no longer, as it was, a question of the U.S. not liking the U.N., and refusing to pay for its operations." To no one's great surprise, though, Washington wants to control the U.N. now that the organization is becoming a "real place," as some like to put it.

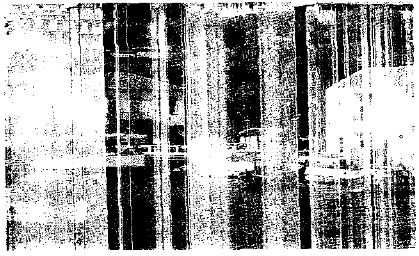
Washington and other key capitals need to establish a forum, or forums, for controlling the traffic in arms of various kinds. Using the U.N. as a principal forum probably isn't realistic. "We are trying to reduce the U.N. focus on arms control—we and the Soviets," says a highly experienced American diplomat who knows about arms control. "What is done and said there about it sounds like a Buddhist prayer wheel, with all the strident North-South differences played out. The problem has to be worked out by the Perm Five countries, but not within the U.N." He adds, however, that these five countries, which account for nearly ninety per cent of the arms trade, won't be able to make much of a dent unless major sources of instability in the world are effectively dealt with. The Perm Five did reach agreement in mid-October on guidelines to govern the export of conventional arms. But these were largely meaningless, and are not likely to affect the ingrained habits of states. In areas of instability, arms will be bought and sold—sold by members of the Perm Five, along with others. The world's biggest arms dealer is the United States, which, since the start of the Persian Gulf crisis, in August of 1990, has announced sales and giveaways exceeding fifteen billion dollars. In 1990 alone, China is estimated to have contracted for the sale of arms worth two and a half billion dollars. China and some other countries have been flogging medium-range ballistic missiles to anyone who is in the market except Iraq. President Dwight Eisenhower used to say that arms buildups impart a momentum to war-making preparations which makes war all but inevitable. Everyone agrees that a world in which the rich few sell huge quantities of high-performance weapons to the impoverished many cannot be a stable place. But the market beckons; for many developing countries, the war against Iraq pointed up their supposed need to acquire arsenals of such weapons.

Other uncertainties, some larger than others, confront the U.N. and obscure its potential as a stabilizing force. The new Secretary-General must wonder to what extent members, starting with the United States, will honor their obligations to the U.N., and thereby allow it to carry out just the tasks on the current agenda. He and the members alike must wonder when and how the Charter will be revised. Financial difficulties aside, the new chief must wonder about how Washington will play its hand at the U.N. and in the world. Iraq could not have been driven from Kuwait, whether by sanctions or force majeure, without America leading the way. Politically, however, the United States could have mounted a successful campaign only within the U.N. framework. In Yugoslavia, by contrast, Washington has chosen to do nothing, either because the E.C., a regional force, seemed better placed to affect the situation or because the Bush Administration wanted no part of turmoil in the Balkans. And the U.N., as noted, has been powerless to do much of anything, although former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, as a special representative, is trying to obtain agreement for a peacekeeping mission.

The foreign policy of the former Soviet Union is far from predictable. Soviet support for the U.N. sanctions against Iraq was essential. But will whoever or whatever takes charge in Moscow—assuming that it remains a center of serious power—be a constructive influence? "That is one of the great unknowns," a senior British diplomat says.

Every period, as historians say, is one of transition, but some periods are more transitional than others. The U.N. and its membership have entered one of those periods. "All the old frames of reference are crumbling," a senior French figure says. "We have a wholly new situation, but not a new world order. Not yet. We cannot even see what might replace what is gone."

—John Newhouse



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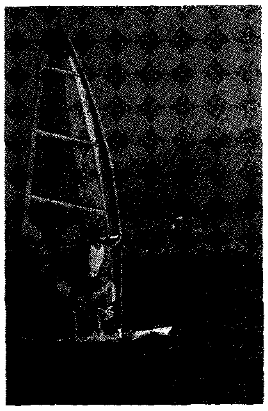
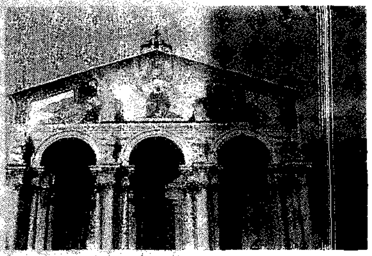
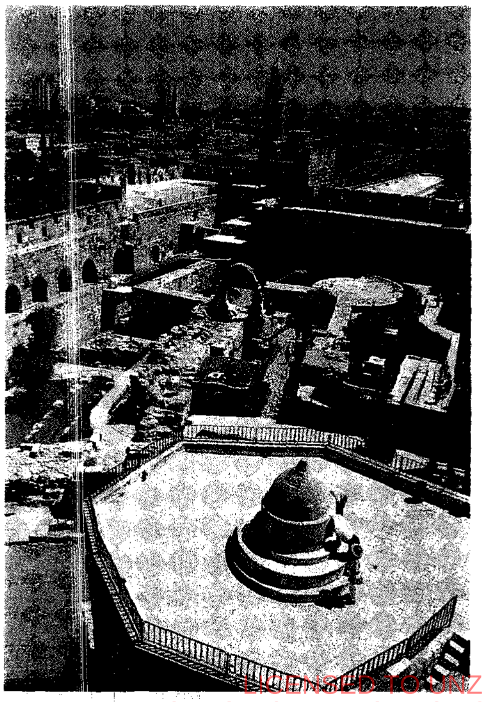
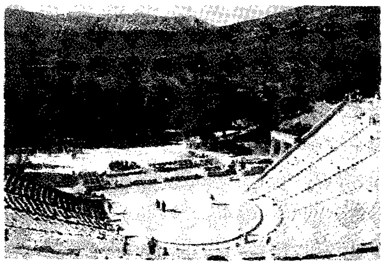


ISRAEL AND GREECE MAGIC IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



With its sparkling turquoise waters, the Mediterranean Sea is a scenic marvel. But there is something else about the Mediterranean, something beyond its natural beauty. A mystical, almost supernatural power seems to emanate from its depths. It was from these waters that modern civilization was born. And on either side of the Eastern Mediterranean, like jewels on an elegant hand, are Israel and Greece, two countries that are living testaments to the magic of the Mediterranean.





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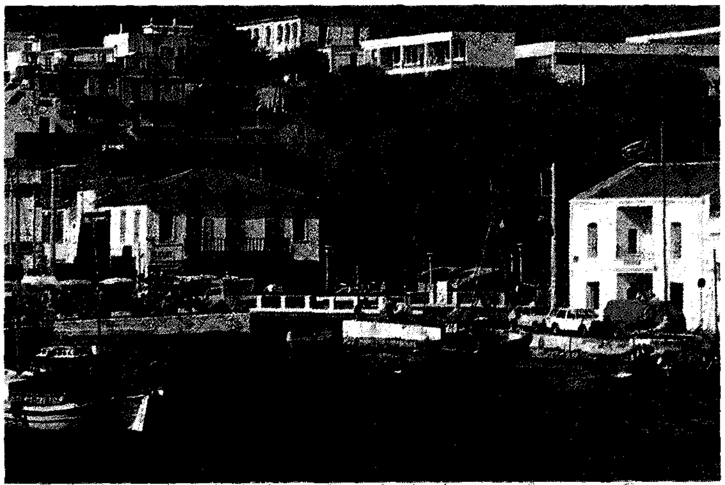
Greece and Israel, though separated by the Mediterranean Sea, share common historical and social legacies. Both countries have traditions of hospitality that are almost legendary.

These longstanding traditions of hospitality led to a historic agreement reached by the ministries of tourism of both countries. This agreement, which was announced last June, centers on joint programs to promote travel to Greece and Israel. As part of the agreement, air access in the region will be upgraded, cruise itineraries expanded, and ferry services and marinas improved.

Another reason for the agreement, of course, is the abundance of ancient treasures still so well preserved in both countries. By visiting the two countries—less than a two-hour flight separates them—visitors have the opportunity to trace the path of history. One New York entrepreneur who travelled to both found the significant archaeological sites of Greece and Israel so staggering he called his trip a "historic mind-bender."



Fashionable Aghios Nikolaos, the principal town of eastern Crete

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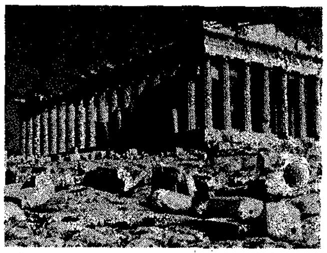
On Macedonia's Halkidiki Peninsula, Greece's northeast region, is the cave of Petralona, where a Neanderthal woman's skeleton was discovered. Neanderthal skeletons and flint tools were also found in Israel in the caves of Mount Carmel. Both caves are open to the public and have museums which recreate pre-historic life in the region.



Greece's most recognizable building, the Parthenon

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On the Greek island of Crete, the Minoans are celebrated for founding Europe's first sophisticated civilization. At the Archaeological Museum in Iraklion, Crete's capital city, Minoan pottery and jewelry are on display. From Iraklion, a twenty-minute bus ride takes you to Knossos, where a royal Minoan palace dating from 1700 B.C. still stands. The riches of Mycenaen kings, including gold masks and cups, now reside in the Archaeological Museum of Athens.

The center of the world during the Hellenic period was Athens, and the crowning masterpiece of Athens was, and still is, the Acropolis. Start with the Propylea, where you enter the "upper city" of the Acropolis that includes the Sanctuary of Poseidon, the Temple of Athena Nike, Erechtheion, a temple that is a grand example of Ionic design, and, finally, the glory of the Acropolis, the Parthenon. At the foot of the Acropolis is the ancient Theatre of Herod Atticus, where Athenians can still watch tragedies written by Euripides and Sophocles.

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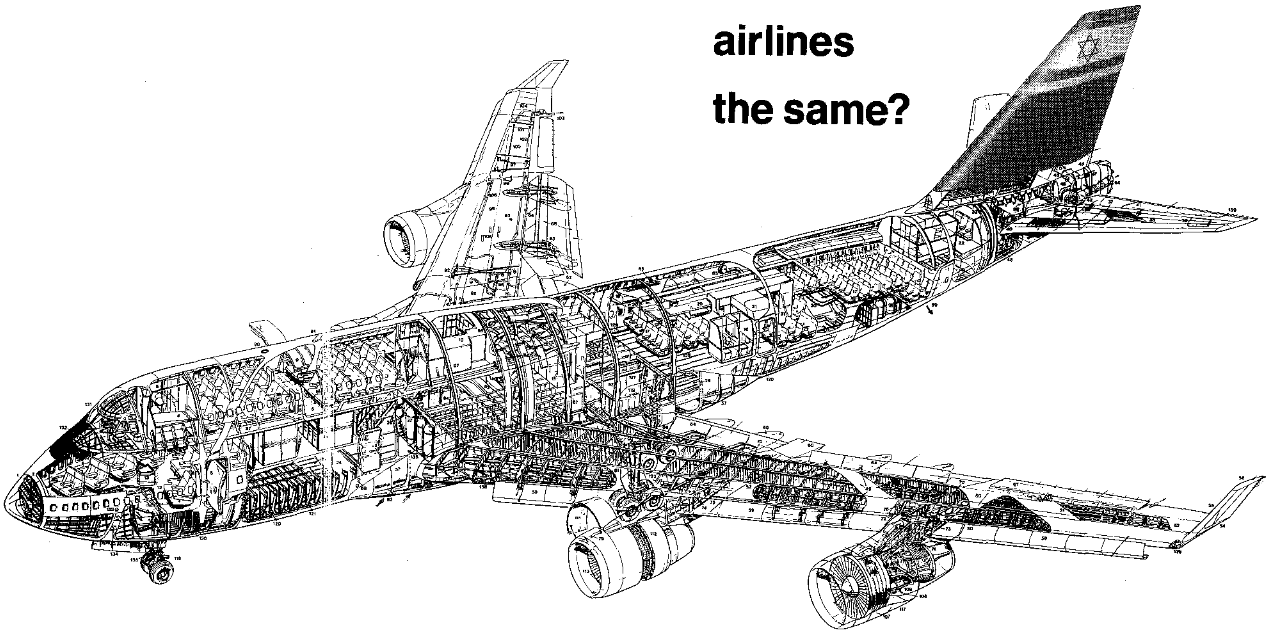

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The tree of Western civilization has its deepest roots in Greece. Biblical Israel was the birthplace of our great religions. By combining a visit to Israel and Greece, you can see how the very rich yet different past of each country has contributed to the world as we know it. At the same time, you can enjoy the spectacular natural beauty and exhilarating ambiance both countries offer today. Itineraries and programs being developed by Greece and Israel under the tourism agreement recently signed by both countries will make it clear why thousands of years of culture and history, scenic splendor, modern facilities, and friendly people make Greece and Israel a natural combination for travellers today.

This year, Greece marked the founding of the world's first democracy, a gift to humanity that is as vital and meaningful now as it was in Athens twenty-five hundred years ago. Another Greek gift is hospitality—in Greek, "philoxenia," love of strangers—a concept Greece shares with Israel. With its history and tradition of hospitality, Greece also offers the unique mystique of its myriad islands, sparkling gems set under the sunny skies of the Aegean and Ionian seas.

While Greece is an ancient land, it lives in the present with a modern tourism infrastructure. Greece is also Western Europe's most affordable travel value, an asset in any combination.

Yassou and welcome to Greece!

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Platon Davakis
Director, Western Hemisphere

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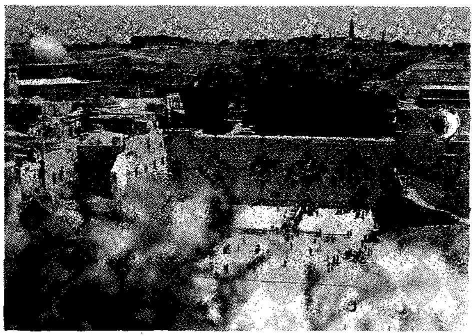
While Greece is an ancient land, it lives in the present with a modern tourism infrastructure.

ILLUSTRATION BY LELAND BURKE

Greece has close to twelve hundred archaeological sites, and not all of them are on the mainland. Many can be found on the Greek islands and, though most people go to the islands for hedonistic fun, an occasional time-out for a history lesson is strongly suggested. Just a short ferry hop from Mykonos, for instance, is the tiny Cycladic island of Delos, the birthplace of the twin gods Apollo and Artemis, where ruins of four temples built in Apollo's honor still remain.

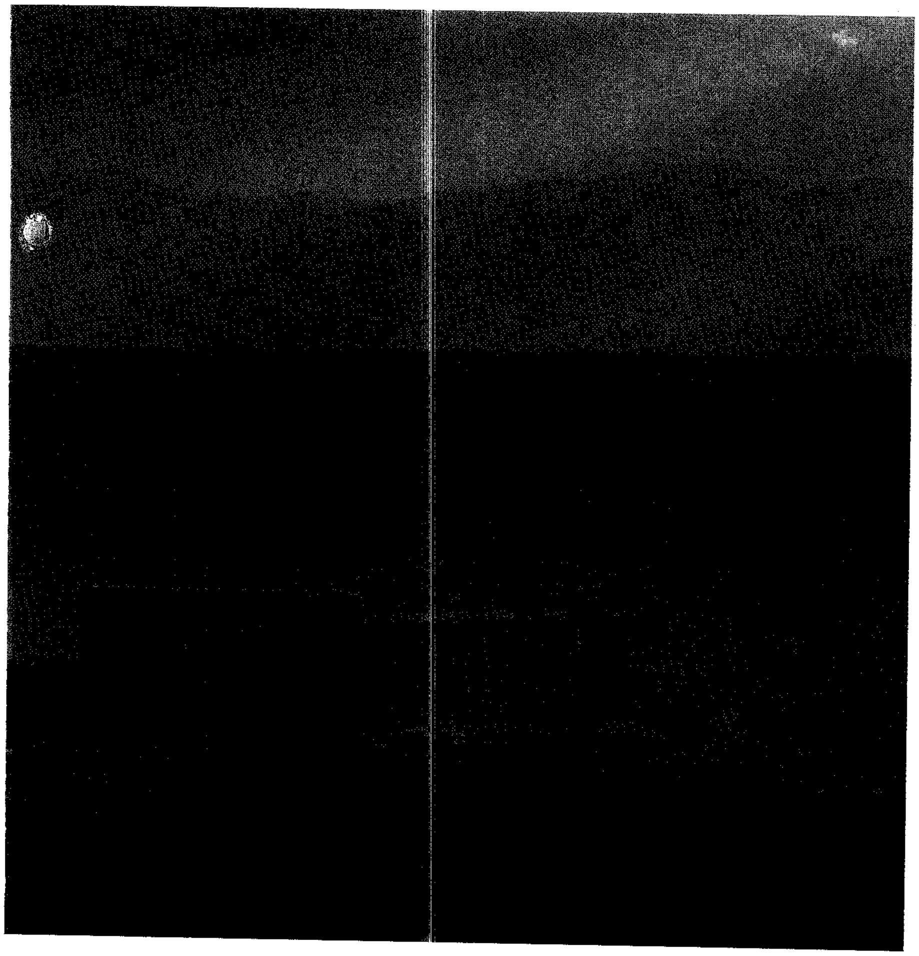


The Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock, far left

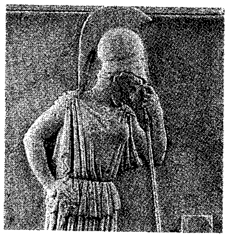
Apollo was also paid homage with a mighty sanctuary in Delphi, a village that's a four-hour ride northwest of Athens. At the center of the sanctuary is the Temple of Apollo. Beyond the temple is the five-thousand-seat theatre, the site of Delphic festivals where the central theme was Apollo's victory over the serpent Python. Further up the cliff you'll find the ruins of the stadium where the Pythian games—forerunner of the current Olympic games—were held every fourth year.

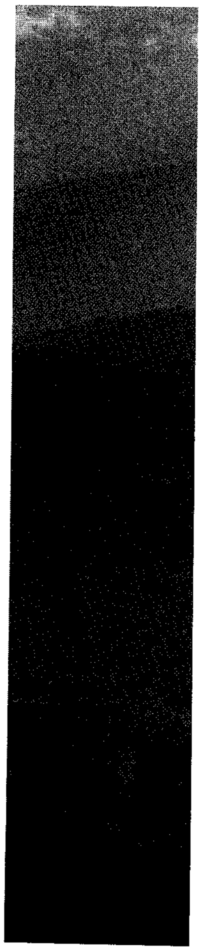
The Dead Sea Scrolls at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem

On his triumphant march through Persia in 333 B.C., Alexander the Great traversed a small province known as



THANK GOD SHE LEFT THE LIGHT ON





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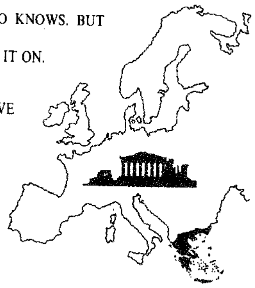
THE GODS COULD HAVE CHOSEN LIGHT FROM ANYWHERE. THEY CHOSE THE LIGHT OF GREECE.



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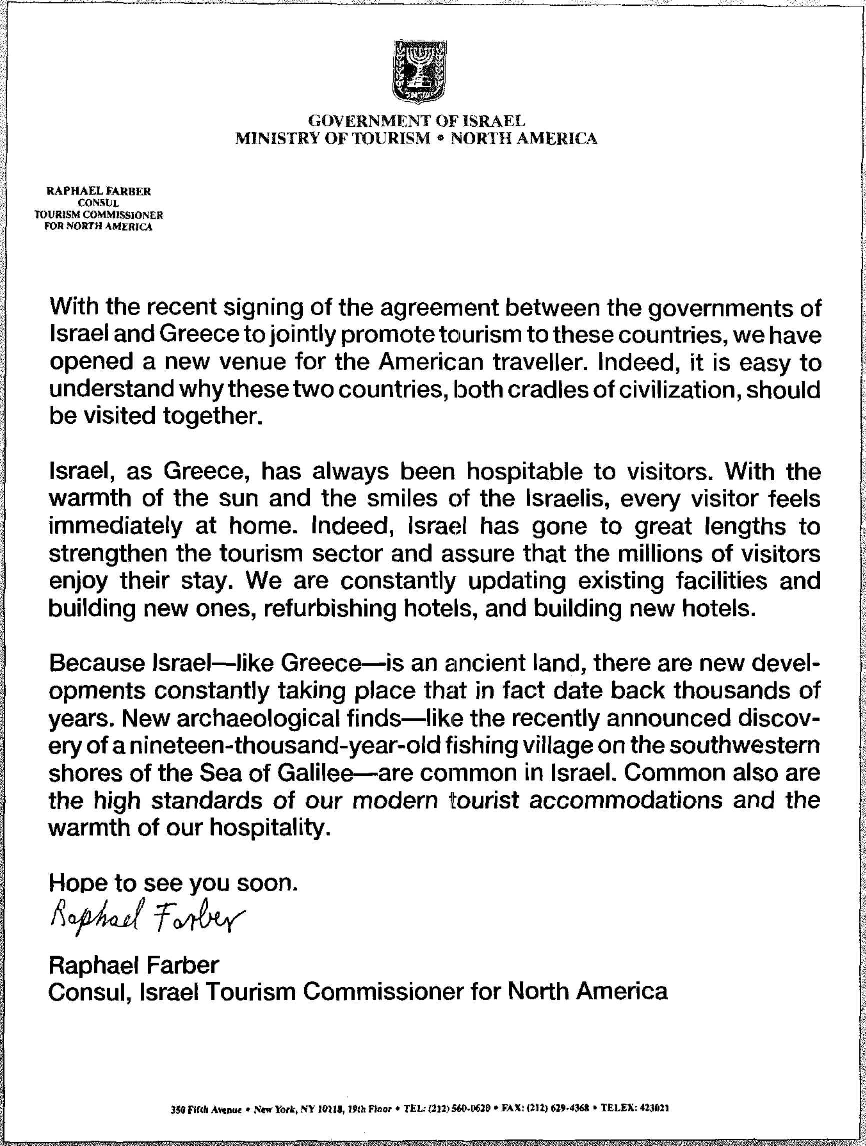

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Raphael Farber

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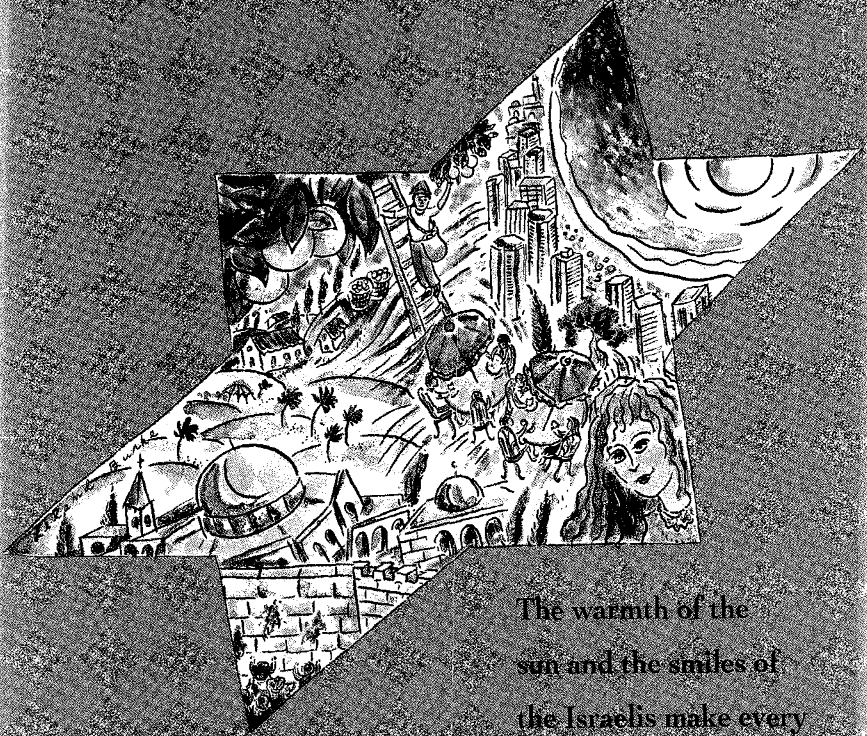

The warmth of the sun and the smiles of the Israelis make every visitor feel welcome.

ILLUSTRATION BY LELAND BURKE

Judea. With its location at the crossroads of three continents—Asia, Europe, and Africa—and its diverse climate and terrain, Judea was recognized as a strategically vital land. That land, now known as Israel, is as vital today as it was thousands of years ago.

There can be no debate that it is one of the oldest and holiest of cities. Practically a living museum, Jerusalem is overflowing with sacred religious shrines and ancient structures. And many of those shrines and structures can be found in Jerusalem's Old City, which is divided into four quarters: Armenian, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. The Citadel, located just inside the Old City's Jaffa Gate, offers visitors amazing views of the temple- and church-steepled skyline. The structure is also the home of the Museum of the History of Jerusalem.

In the Jewish Quarter of the Old City is a fifty-foot-high stone structure that was the only thing left standing after the Romans ransacked the city around A.D. 70. Mourning the destruction of their temple, Jews prayed at the wall for its restoration. Thus this symbolic conglomeration of bricks was named the Wailing Wall (or Western Wall as it is also known). The Wailing Wall continues to be a place of worship for Jews who sometimes leave their written prayers between the cracks of its ancient stones.

A panoramic view of Lindos, Rhodes

An astonishing example of the Old City's diversity is the grand Moslem

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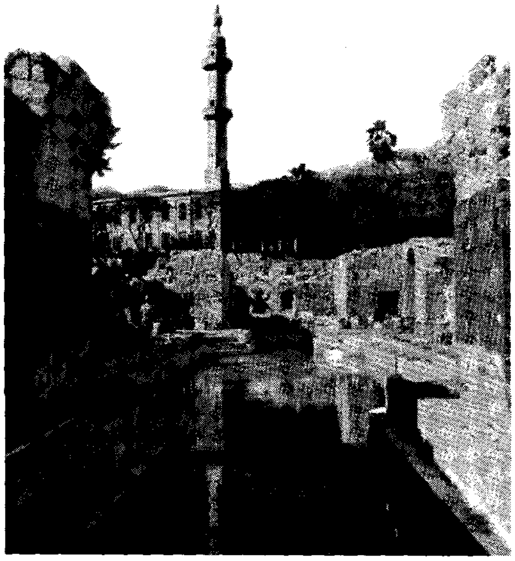

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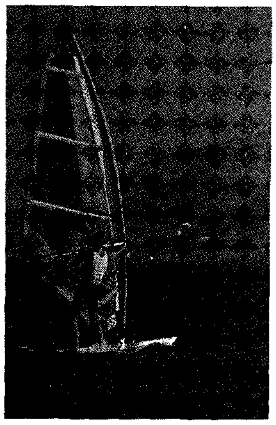
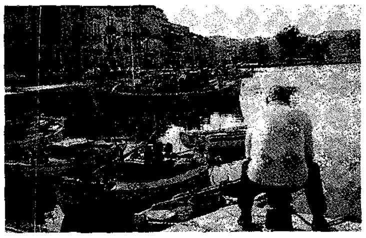


Vacationers windsurf on the Sea of Galilee

mosque, the Dome of the Rock. It is ornately crafted with mosaic tile work, marble, stained-glass windows, and topped by a gold-plated dome. Historic Christian landmarks are also plentiful. On a path called Via Dolorosa, each Friday a Franciscan procession reënacts Jesus' sorrowful journey along the stations of the cross, which concludes within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a huge edifice with intricate mosaic and stone work. Nearby is Mount Zion where, for eight hundred years, Jewish pilgrims have come, and continue to come, to pray and light candles at King David's Tomb.

Because of Jerusalem's historical significance, it's only fitting that the city is home to one of the greatest archaeological museums in the world, the Israel Museum, which contains the Dead Sea Scrolls. The museum is also noted for its outstanding collection of Judaica and for the Billy Rose Sculpture Garden, designed by Japanese landscape architect Isamu Noguchi.

Just seven miles from Jerusalem is that little town of Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. Marking the exact spot is the Church of the Nativity, the oldest still standing in Israel. Normally a quiet Christian village, Bethlehem comes to life during the Christmas season when colorful processions and festivities frequently enliven the streets.

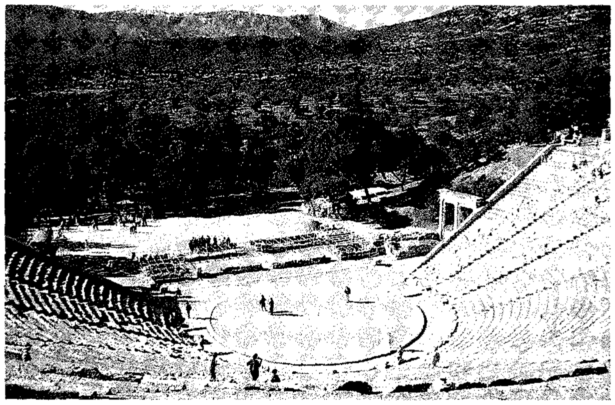


Gythion, the port from which Paris sailed for Troy

It would be difficult for any other two countries to surpass the ancient histories of Israel and Greece. But while ancient history is an important part of the fabric of these two countries, modern life not only exists, it thrives.

Maybe, while in Athens, an evening of typical Greek music in a *bouzouki* nightclub might be your idea of a good time. Or perhaps, while in Tel Aviv, you'll want to take in a modern dance exhibition or dance a little on your own at one of the city's many nightclubs. Whatever your preference, the best place to experience contemporary Israel and Greece is in their two largest cities.

When it was founded by Jaffa's Jewish residents on sand dunes in 1909 to provide relief from the heat, who would have thought that Tel Aviv would soon become Israel's business and cultural center? Truly a cosmopolitan city, Tel Aviv has become the home of many people from all over the world. With its European-style sidewalk cafés on Dizengoff Street, Arab homes in the Yemenite Quarter, and abundance of French, Chinese, Japanese, Hungarian, and other foreign restaurants, the ethnic diversity in Tel Aviv is staggering. The city is also the home of the Zubin Mehta-conducted Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and of countless museums and galleries.



Classic Greek drama is still performed at this ancient ampitheater in Epidaurus

The Church of All Nations, Mount of Olives

Compared to virtually newborn Tel Aviv, Athens is a grande dame. But it's a grande dame with a youthful, energetic, rather large heart. Socializing under the stars on a hot summer night, haggling over gold candlesticks at a flea market, munching on *mezedes* in a friendly *taverna*, heartily debating the prospects of the Greek basketball team with your cab driver—these are just some of the things that make Athens such a special city.

But city life in Greece and Israel, as it is in so many of the world's big cities, can sometimes be hectic, a sensory overload. To get away from the crowds and the noise, one must leave the city and head for oases of serenity, destinations where the senses can be revitalized in an environment of natural beauty. In Israel and Greece it seems almost unfair that two countries have been blessed with so much diverse natural beauty. But maybe it's another example of the magic of the Mediterranean.

Greek waters are indisputably

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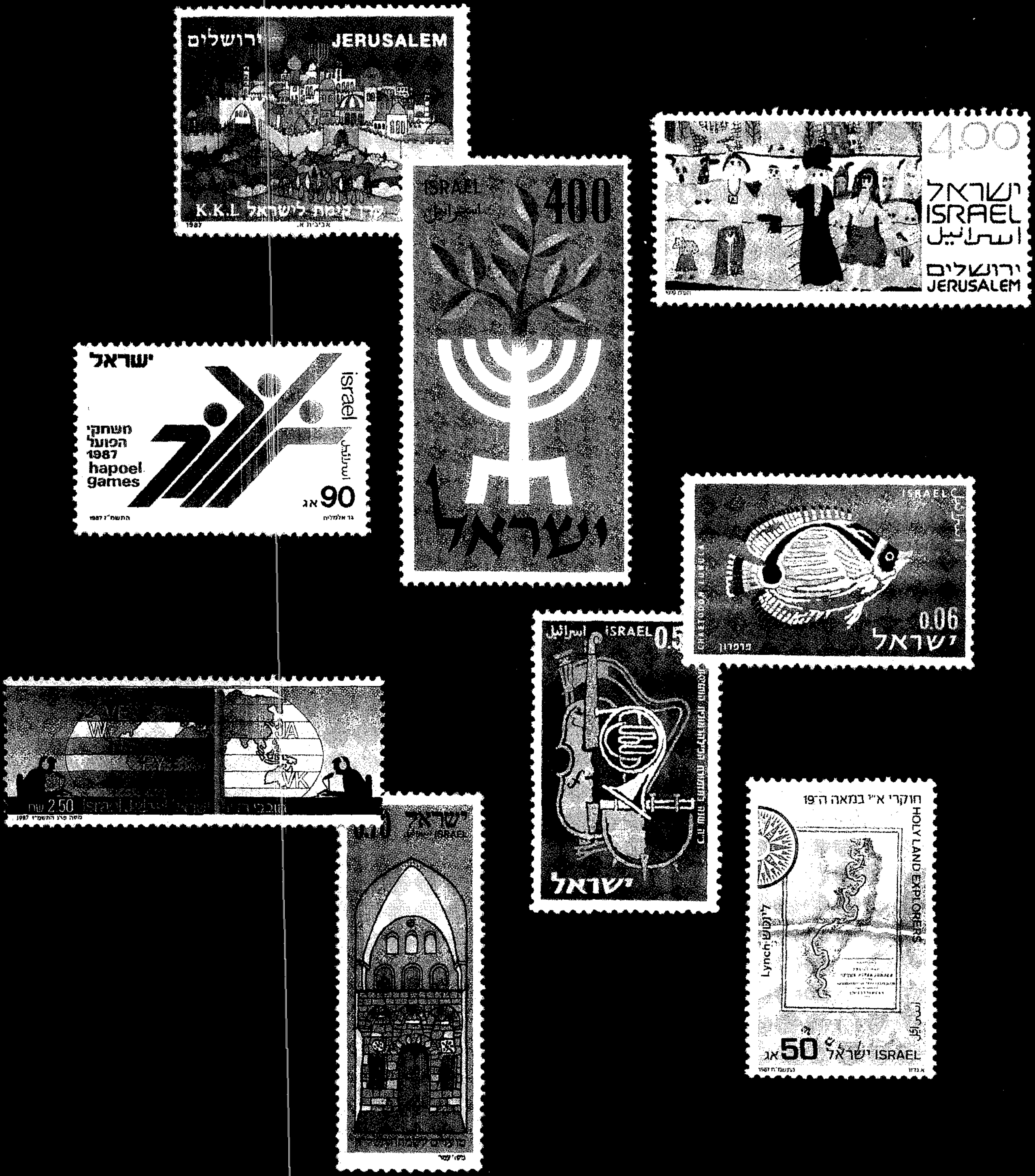
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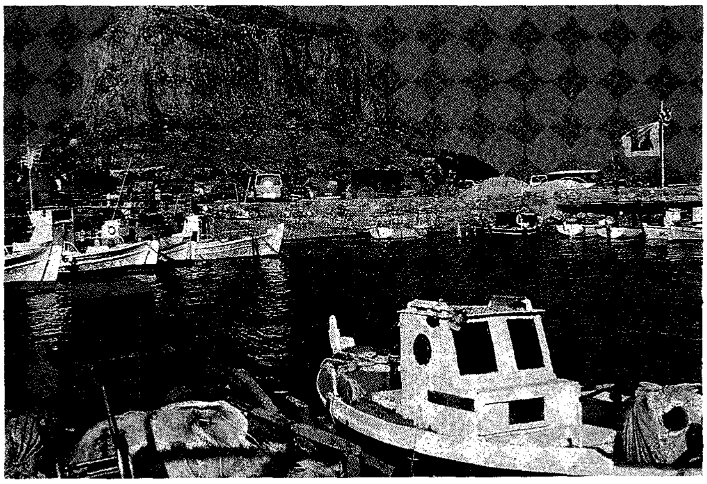
Another favorite is sailing the Aegean, starting with Santorini, one of the thirty-nine islands in the Cycladic chain, where you'll see whitewashed cubist houses. Then move on to nearby Mykonos, where you can dance the night away on one of the island's famed beaches. Veering southeast from Mykonos, you can sail through the Dodecanese islands to Rhodes. Further south in the Dodecanese chain is Karpathos, where you'll find traditionally costumed village women.

The final stop on your journey will be the largest and southernmost Greek island, Crete. This is the land of Zorba, where you can share a lunch of grilled octopus and wine with a fishing family, explore the Diktain Cave, the legendary birthplace of Zeus, or just find a stretch of sand and relax under the extremely gracious Greek sun.

Relaxation. Sun. Sand. Just as in Greece, you will find all three in Israel. And where else but in Israel can you experience such dramatic changes in climate? In two hours you can go from snow flurries in the morning to a warm beach in the afternoon. The preferred beach for Israeli vacationers during the few winter months is on the Red Sea in Elat, which is said to have some of the best scuba diving in the world. But you don't have to dive to observe the coral structures and exotic tropical fish. At the Coral World Underwater Observatory, you can walk down to a depth of sixteen feet and look out into the coral reef, or travel on a new yellow submarine to see this magnificent underwater world.



The village of Monemvasia, the "Gibraltar of Greece"

North of Elat is the Dead Sea, located on Israel's eastern edge some thirteen hundred feet below sea level, making it the lowest spot on earth. It also contains more salt and minerals than any other body of water. The combination of these elements gives the Dead Sea its reputation as a superb, natural skin emulsifier. So while you're floating on Dead Sea water, you'll also be rejuvenating your skin.

An aerial view of Jerusalem's Old City

Still further north is the Sea of Galilee, which is really a freshwater lake. These are the waters upon which it is said Jesus walked. Now, these are the waters where vacationers wind surf and water ski.

If you want to get away from water and sand, try an excursion into the lush Carmel range where the Mount Carmel National Park is located. The park is Israel's largest national forest and includes a two-thousand-acre nature preserve. Hiking through, you might see a wandering gazelle.

On Israel's west coast, return to the sea that spawned all of this beauty—the Mediterranean. Beaches dot Israel's Mediterranean coast, from ancient Ashkelon, south of Tel Aviv, to the resorts of the north, Herzliyya-by-the-Sea and Netanya, where the smell of orange blossoms fills the air.

Greece and Israel —two distinctly different countries, yet with so much in common.

Brian Silverman is the coeditor of the forthcoming *Twentieth-Century Treasury of Sports*.

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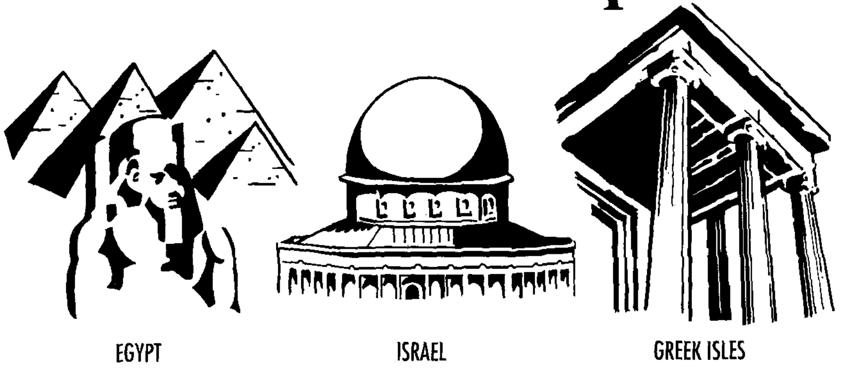

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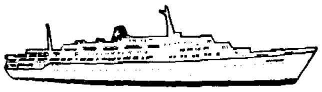

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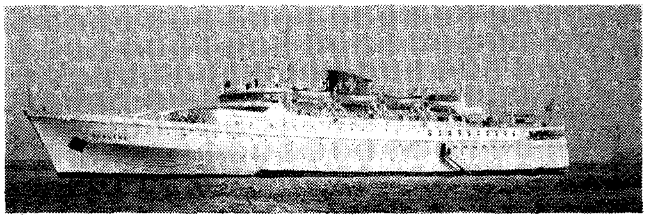

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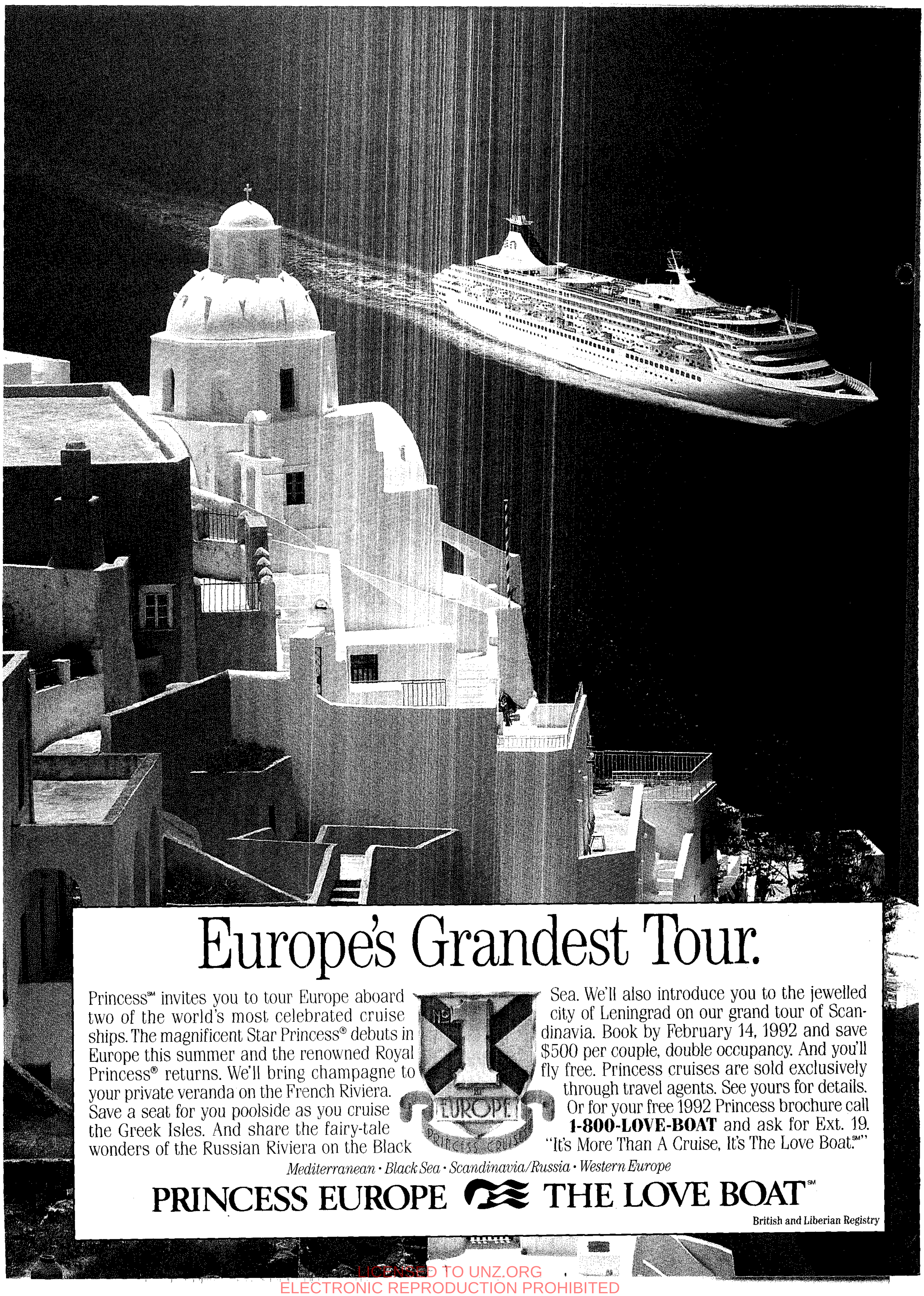

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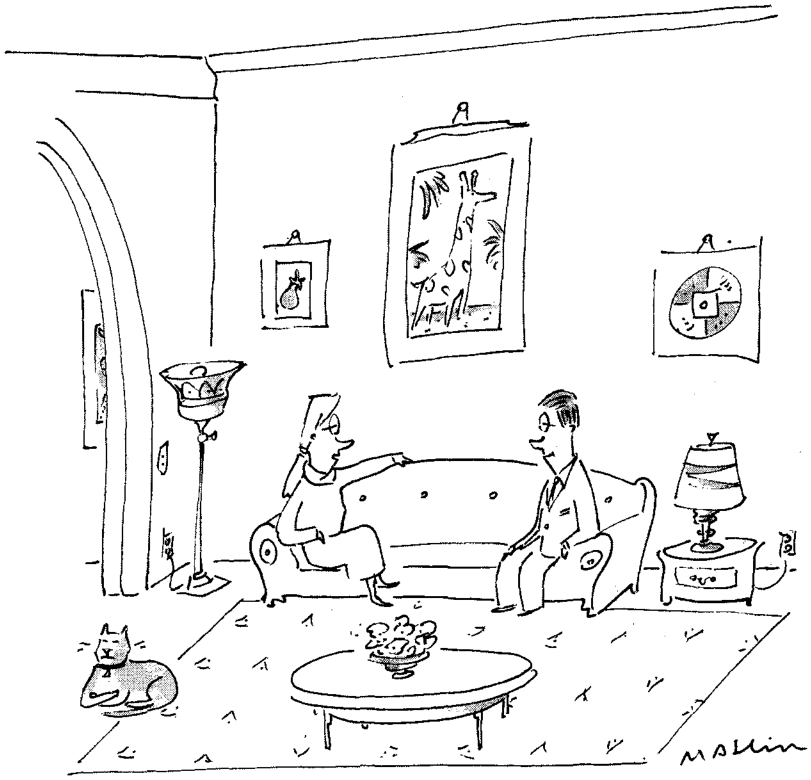
THE CURRENT CINEMA

Song of Herself

IN the opening sequence of "For the Boys," Bette Midler presents herself to the audience as a crusty octogenarian. The old-age makeup has been applied so thickly that her head appears massive; she seems to be wearing padding under her bathrobe, too. She looks as though she had as many layers as the earth itself. There's something strangely appropriate about this effect. In "For the Boys," Midler piles persona on top of persona on top of persona for two and a half hours in an attempt to overwhelm us with the sheer force and infinite variety of herself: she is the world. The movie, which was produced by her own company, has been constructed to serve as the Portable Bette—a boxed set of Midler moments, remixed and repackaged for Christmas giving. The elderly tough-broad behemoth we meet in the movie's first scene is, of course, a narrative device—a flashback-generator. This woman, Dixie Leonard, is a singer-dancer-comedienne who became famous in the early days of the Second World War, when she teamed up with an established star named Eddie Sparks (James Caan). In the framing story, Dixie and Eddie have been invited to an awards ceremony intended to honor them for their many years of entertaining troops on U.S.O. tours. Dixie refuses to appear onstage with her old partner, and the producers of the shindig dispatch a polite young man (Arye Gross) to call on her and get her to change her mind. The emissary listens worshipfully as Dixie recalls key episodes in the history of her up-and-down relationship with Eddie. Most of the dramatic high points of her reminiscences take place in wartime, and the picture's big sequences are organized around four U.S.O. shows: one in London and one in North Africa during the Second World War; one in Korea in the early fifties; and, finally, one in Vietnam in 1969. This structure allows Midler to perform musical numbers from different eras and to attempt the acting tour de force of playing a character at several distinct stages of life. Her performance is a stunt, a shameless display of virtuosity, and it's not nearly as much fun as it should be; it's too calculated.

Midler gets off to a nice start, though, in the initial flashback sequence, in which Dixie and Eddie do their act together for the first time. The setting is London during the blitz. Dixie, wearing nothing but an officer's jacket and high heels, takes the stage to an excited chorus of cheers and wolf whistles, and proceeds to steal the show from Eddie: she improvises some raunchy patter, sings a couple of songs, flirts with the servicemen, and does it all with an endearing lack of restraint. As a singer, Midler is a belter in the Merman style, and her way with sexual innuendo is barely less blatant than Mae West's. When she's at her best, as she is in this long sequence, she wins the audience over with a combination of there's-no-business-like-show-business ebullience and I'm-no-angel vulgarity. It's pure chutzpah: we sense an iron will to entertain. In this mode, she pushes herself to the brink of self-parody, and then beyond; she doesn't take herself seriously, doesn't mind looking ridiculous, just as long as she gets a rise out of the audience. This is the persona—the campy, retro, forties-style trouper—that made Bette Midler a star in the seventies. The London scenes in "For the Boys" are deliberate reminders of her early appeal, and for a while the picture has a certain trashy charm; the director, Mark Rydell (who also directed Midler in her first starring vehicle, "The Rose," in 1979), isn't shy about milking our good will toward her old, raucous style.

But when the movie gets past the "Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy" era the party's over. Dixie and Eddie keep singing and hoofing and trading double-entendres, but they also begin to gather around them an unwelcome aura of significance. The scenes in Korea and Vietnam feature "realistic" combat footage. Eddie's professional-patriot style starts to take on evil overtones: during the McCarthy era, he fires an old friend who has exhibited some faintly leftist tendencies; in Vietnam, he cheerleads for the Pentagon, and the movie wants us to believe that he shares responsibility for the war's casualties. He starts off as a creep, and sinks lower with each new historical development. But Dixie just seems to get nobler and nobler as the bodies pile up around her. She weeps over dying soldiers, scolds Eddie for his cowardice in the blacklist episode, and worries about her son, whom she



"The smile frozen on your face, Glen—how long will it take to defrost?"

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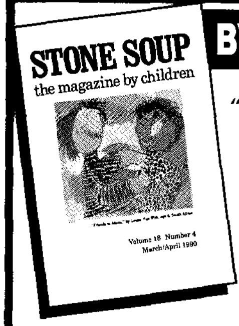

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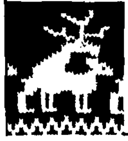

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has brought up by herself since he was five or six. (Her husband was killed in action in the Second World War.) We realize, with mounting horror, that Midler is recapitulating her entire career in this picture, from the exuberant tackiness of her seventies act right through the self-aggrandizing sentimentality of recent movies like "Beaches" and "Stella"—and that this strenuous exercise in image-consolidation is, in fact, the movie's sole reason for being. The picture itself has a kind of life-achievement-award feel to it: when it's over, the words "a great entertainer and a wonderful human being" seem to have acquired a new, unprecedentedly berserk meaning.

One of the many unintentional ironies of "For the Boys" (whose screenplay is signed by Marshall Brickman, Neal Jimenez, and Lindy Laub) is that its antiwar sentiments seem every bit as cynical as Eddie's enthusiastic militarism: they're both pristine specimens of show-biz piety—ways for entertainers to whip up some easy, ego-gratifying applause. The movie's phoniness reaches its peak in the Vietnam scenes. Dixie and Eddie are playing to a difficult crowd here, a bunch of exhausted, unsmiling young men who don't have much in common with the neatly groomed, superbly receptive audiences of the Second World War shows; these guys look like bikers in a really bad mood. Eddie's flag-waving and corny one-liners elicit a stony response. And, as in virtually every scene in the picture, his failure sets up Dixie's triumph. She talks tough and dirty to her audience, and then croons a maudlin rendition of "In My Life," and the grunts are visibly moved; the camera pans slowly across them as they listen reverently, their faces shining with gratitude. Once again, Dixie has upstaged her partner, professionally and morally. In acting terms, though, Caan walks off with the movie. Every time Midler stops the show with a flashy musical number or a heavy emotional scene, Caan quietly gets it going again. He knows better than to try to be ingratiating; the screenplay wraps Midler in so much virtue that there's none left for him anyway. He just bears down on the character and turns it into a witty, precise portrait of a cheerfully opportunistic entertainer: Eddie's a heel, but he's a recognizable human being—the only one in the movie. Of course, Caan doesn't have to carry the picture; it's Midler's vehicle, not his, and the magnitude of this vanity production takes its toll on the star. After two and a half hours of accumulating flattering images of herself and lugging them, along with the rest of the baggage of her career, across the battlefields of several decades, she looks, in the end, as if she could barely move anymore. (She has only enough energy left, we sense, to totter onto a stage and accept an award.) In "For the Boys," Bette Midler begins as a red-hot mama and winds up as Mother Courage. And the movie is such an ordeal that it turns into a demonstration of a startling thesis: War is bad, but entertainment is hell.

HECTOR BABENCO's "At Play in the Fields of the Lord," which is based on Peter Matthiessen's 1965 novel of the same name, feels lifeless right from the start, and it perks up only occasionally in the course of the three hours and ten minutes it takes to tell its story. Matthiessen's narrative (adapted, extremely conscientiously, by Babenco and the veteran screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière) is set in the Amazon basin, and it's about the destruction of an Indian tribe by a combination of capitalist greed and cultural insensitivity. The Niaruna Indians (a fictional tribe) are besieged both by the local authorities, who are eager to exploit their land, and by a persistent little band of Protestant missionaries from America, who want to save their souls. Matthiessen's epic may have held some surprises for its mid-sixties readers, but its ideas have since lost a lot of their power and all their freshness. The story illustrates the sort of spiritual and philosophical tensions that have become awfully familiar to readers and moviegoers in the past twenty-five years, and it resolves them in what is now the accepted way—with a climactic massacre, a genocidal apocalypse. Maybe this is a tale that can't be told often enough, but the movie of "At Play in the Fields of the Lord" doesn't provide very persuasive evidence for that position. An air of fatigue and defeat pervades the picture. The effort that Babenco and his actors have put into dramatizing this material is heartbreakingly apparent, yet, no matter how hard they work, the scenes refuse to play, and the movie never manages to generate any real momentum.

It's an honest, well-intentioned flop—the sort of bad movie that's especially gruelling to sit through, because we keep pulling for it, wishing it were better, hoping for some redeeming moment of originality or insight to jolt us out of our inertia. Babenco, unfortunately, isn't an imaginative enough filmmaker to transcend the schematic nature of the story. The movie sets up the dramatic conflicts with wrong-headed care. They're not that complex, and most of the characters are one-dimensional, instantly readable, yet Babenco treats every scene as if it contained infinite riches: he draws out simple actions, reiterates obvious ideas, and lingers on the faces of characters who have no more secrets to yield up. Among the actors—a high-powered group that includes John Lithgow, Tom Berenger, Kathy Bates, and Daryl Hannah—only Aidan Quinn, as a young missionary who learns to respect the Indians' culture, comes through at all, and even his performance doesn't begin to take shape until the movie is almost half over. His character turns out to be the emotional center of the story, but he doesn't make a strong impression at first, because the screenwriters don't give him anything to do in the early, expository sequences: they keep him standing around looking befuddled and vaguely sympathetic.

The movie plods dutifully to its inevitable conclusion, but there's one unusual touch near the end. The Niarunas are wiped out in two stages: many of them die from a flu virus carried by one of the missionaries' wives; the rest are victims of an air strike ordered by the evil provincial commandant. This double-barrelled plotting is an ingenious way of insuring that all parties receive their fair share of blame for the atrocities. Babenco and his company do their damnedest to convince themselves (and us) that they're plunging into virgin territory, but this expedition is too late and too slow: by the time "At Play in the Fields of the Lord" reaches its destination, the ground has already been picked clean. —TERRENCE RAFFERTY

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SOCIAL NOTES FROM ALL OVER

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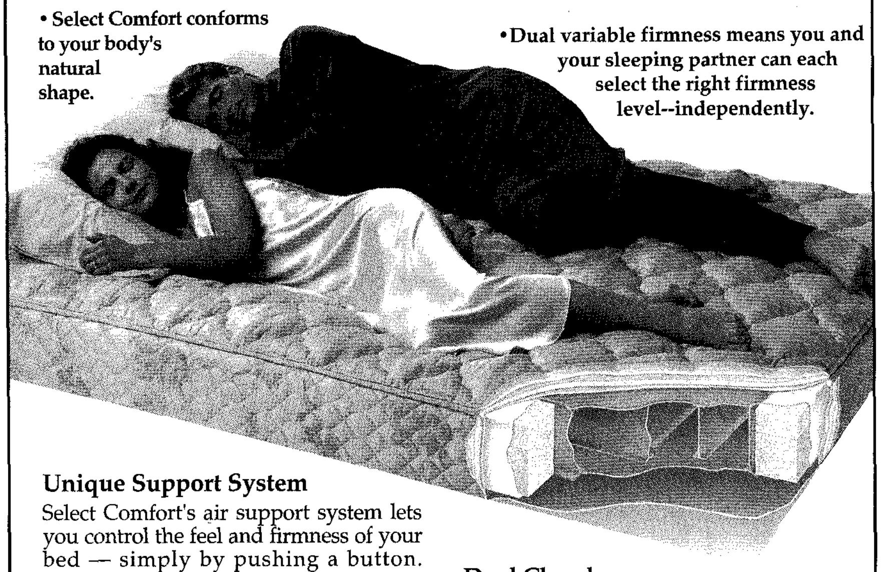

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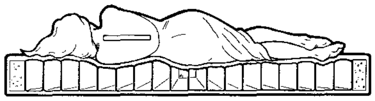

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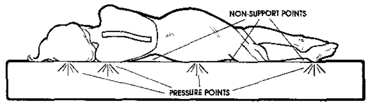
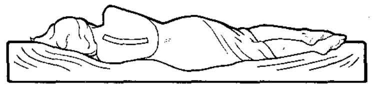


Innersprings polarize body contours, creating pressure points and uneven support.



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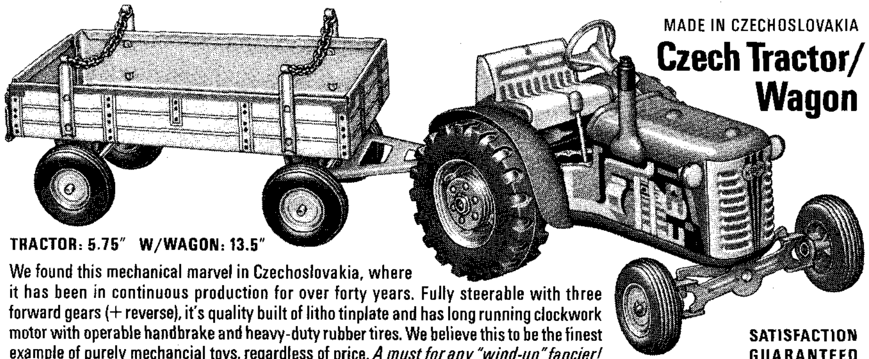

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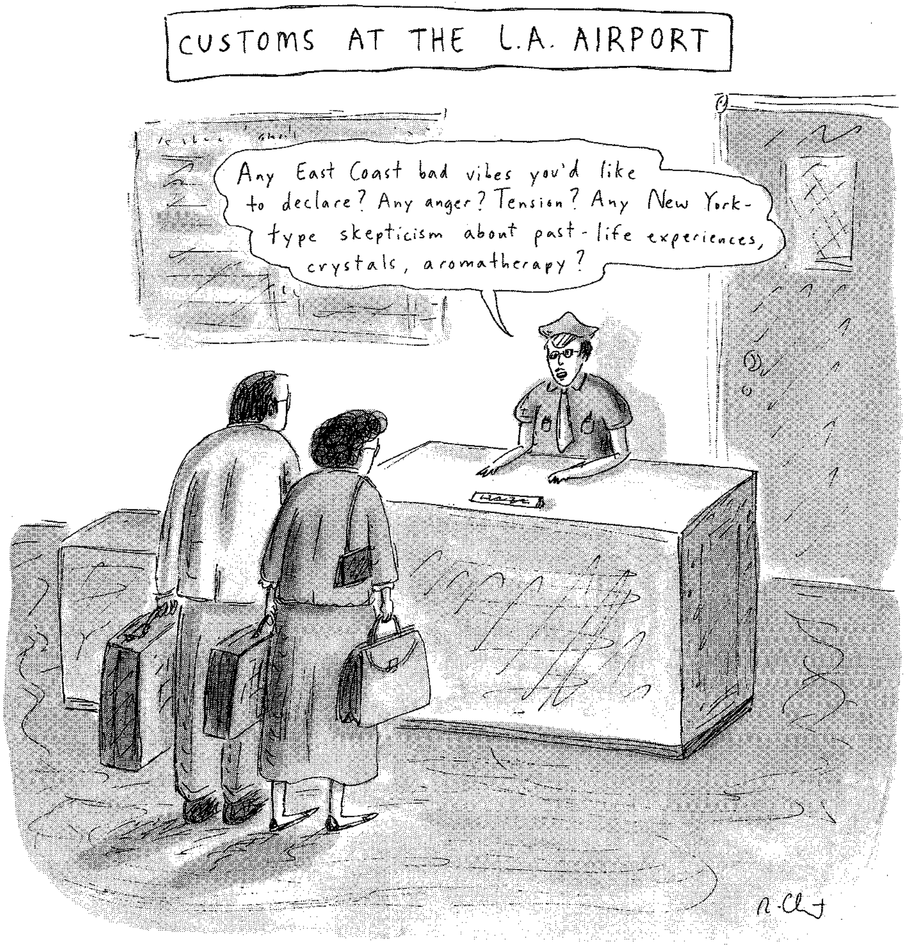
GIFTS FOR THE HOUSE

FIVE minutes' conversation with Katherine Tiddens, and you will never buy a U2 T-shirt again (or a watercolor-floral easy-care sheet, or an aqua towel with checked dobby). Ms. Tiddens is the founder and owner of the Terra Verde Trading Company, 72 Spring Street (Lafayette), an—indeed, the only—ecological department store in New York City. "T-shirts have created ecological havoc," she told us. "More pesticides are used on cotton than on any other crop worldwide. Defoliants are usually used to make the leaves drop, and then the fabric is bleached, dyed, and washed with nasty things. It's treated with chemicals to condition or finish the fabric, and then, of course, there's the lettering and the logo." Encouraged to elaborate, she said, "We've cut out three bad things—bleach, dyes, and formaldehyde—but we haven't worked out all the bugs yet. It's very difficult and expensive to grow organic cotton. A universal problem is controlling the weeds. The cultivators used to control the weeds pack it down, so the soil has to be tilled every few years, and the tractors that do the cultivating and the tilling make huge clouds of diesel exhaust. The wave of the future is hemp. You can make paper and fabric out of it, and it's easier to grow organically than cotton. But it's illegal to grow hemp in this country, so the fabric has to be imported."

Terra Verde occupies the ground floor of a loft building, and not only the merchandise but all the materials used in the construction of the store are about as environmentally correct as is possible these days. No plywood or fibreglass is used, and everything is either recycled or non-toxic or non-polluting or energy-saving, or all of the above. The store has been painted white and a cool green; the counters and cupboards are of natural wood, and are stocked with products for the home, the garden, and the office. The atmosphere is one of orderly and confident tranquillity, and it is seductive. A customer feels not only tempted but justified in buying up a storm, because of the moral uplift. A few items, such as afghans and hand towels, are dyed (with dyes that do not contain harmful metals), but for the most part the choice of colors in soft wares is natural, écru, ivory, or bone. (Anyone out there who thinks that cotton starts out white might be interested to know that it has to be first bleached and then *dyed* white.) In bed linens, the prices start at $90 for a queen set (two sheets and two pillowcases; two-hundred-thread count) called Simply Cotton, by J. P. Stevens, which comes in a recycled box. A step up are some Egyptian-cotton sheets from England (Peter Reed), with a two-hundred-and-fifty-thread count; $68 for a full/queen flat sheet, and $176 for a set. For the princess-and-the-pea, there are paisley sheets from Austria, two-hundred-and-fifty-thread count; $145 for a queen flat sheet, and $345 for a set. The way it works is: the higher the thread count, the softer the sheets, the higher the price. Simply Cotton sheets are comparable to what used to be called muslin sheets. Back then, muslin sheets were for children; grownups slept on percale. For purposes of comparison, a queen-size two-hundred-thread ecologically incorrect sheet that needs to be ironed is made by Wamsutta and costs $72 at Bloomingdale's. Bloomingdale's also carries Simply Cotton bed linen ($106 per queen set), and Ad Hoc Softwares, 410 West Broadway (Spring), has some stylish sheets from the Purist Collection of e.c. linens (German), in a small houndstooth, which are a hundred per cent cotton, with a two-hundred-and-twenty-thread count ($136 for a queen flat sheet and $140 for a queen fitted sheet; $324 a set). A J. P. Stevens bath towel is $15. A bath towel from the Purist Collection is $33, and a cotton-and-linen towel called a "friction" towel ("It improves the circulation and gently exfoliates"), made in Ireland, is $57; it's extra-large, and has an insert of white-and-beige stripes.


CUSTOMS AT THE L.A. AIRPORT
Any East Coast bad vibes you'd like to declare? Any anger? Tension? Any New York-type skepticism about past-life experiences, crystals, aromatherapy?

Colored cotton is represented at Terra Verde by some sweaters that come in brown, green, or coyote. This cotton is the brainchild of Sally Fox, a spinner and entomologist who lives in

California, and who, nine years ago, in the course of trying to breed an insect-resistant cotton plant, noticed that occasionally a plant produced green or brown cotton. She thinks that other colors are possible, and now has a business, called Natural Cotton Colours, that produces Fox Fibre, her colored cotton. (Levi Strauss has contracted for several hundred acres.) A peculiarity of these cottons is that when they are washed the colors grow darker instead of fading. The sweaters are from $225 to $275.

Also at Terra Verde: simple pottery, with clean lines, is made with recycled glazes and clay, and comes in seastone (akin to turquoise) and canvas white. The dinner plates cost $17.50, as does a square sushi plate. A small covered casserole is $35, and a deep serving bowl is $50. A capacious cotton-canvas tote bag, made by the Maine Center for the Blind, is $17; a large cake of e.c. soap comes in several flavors (seaweed, green clay, and bran wheat, among others), for $5, and the scents are not too strong. Citrus-based turpentine (by Livos, another German company) has as agreeable a smell as any of the soaps, and can be used with artists' oils as well as with house paint; $10.75 a litre. Rain sticks come in three sizes—twenty-three, eighteen, and ten inches long—and this model is a decorated, sealed wooden cylinder filled with little seeds; when it's tipped, the falling seeds sound something like rain. Rain sticks will never replace cloud seeding, but they are a curiosity and cost a mere $35.50, $26.50, and $13.50, respectively. The blockbuster here is the RF-16 Sun Frost refrigerator, which, according to *Popular Science*, uses anywhere from sixty to ninety per cent less energy than a standard-model refrigerator. It is exceptionally quiet; doesn't eat up the kitchen; keeps food fresher, because it has a high-humidity storage bin; and can be put smack up against a wall. A cooling system that contains only one moving part (the compressor) and the absence of fans, coils, and an icemaker contribute to what is expected to be "well over 15 years of trouble-free operation," and that is good news, because the RF-16 costs $2,500. The model in the store has a capacity of sixteen cubic feet and is squarish, refreshingly plain, and white, but the fridge is available in other sizes, in natural wood, and in over a hundred colors.

AROUND the corner and up the street, Dean & DeLuca, 560 Broadway (Prince), is selling the ultimate in e.c. paper goods for the table: mats, from India, that are made of real leaves. (The sticker on the back of the package reads "Made from Diospyros Melanoxylon, Roxb.," which sounds like something that's not environmentally friendly but is in fact a tree.) The leaves are pinned together with stiff grass, and in India they are used and thrown away, but, with care, they could be used again; $10 for a package of ten. Fringed cotton throws, woven in North Carolina, are in many stores and catalogues, but D. & D. has cornered the market—with the Twelve Days of Christmas, Paisley and Partridge, American Hare, fruits, cowboys, Mesa (Southwestern influence), a red-and-green plaid. Some are double-weave, some are triple, and the colors are predominantly barn red, green, and cream (the Hare is green, black, cream, and white), and all the throws are reversible; $40 to $50.

An array of Mexican pottery here, hand-thrown and hand-painted, has lead-free glazes and is ovenproof, but subjecting it to a dishwasher is not recommended. The painting leans toward leaves and imprecise geometrics rather than merry peasants. A dinner plate is $20, a thirteen-inch bowl or a sixteen-inch platter is $75, and a fourteen-inch bowl with handles is $150. Shipments of Nicholas Mosse's pottery, from Ireland, and Biot pottery, from France, are expected momentarily. (Joel Dean has been expecting the shipments momentarily for six weeks.) Next to candy, soap is the customary fallback of the desperate Christmas shopper, and practically any recipient over the age of twenty-two appreciates such a present. Many stores have got on the bandwagon with fine hand soaps made from vegetable oils, and D. & D. carries a line called Mon Jardinet. There are six scents, accompanied by some prose that is a caution ("Scattered by the Romans on their bridal beds, Rose petals have an aroma that opens the mind and the heart"), but the soaps actually smell like the real

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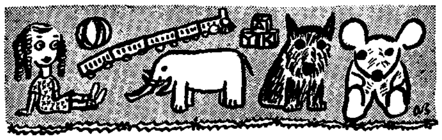
thing, and are milled many times, so they last; $8.

Mexican pottery appears to have had a resurgence in this country, possibly because of the economy. Eighty per cent of the merchandise at Bazaar Sabado, 54 Greene Street (Broome), which opened a few months ago, is Mexican; also represented are Peru, Guatemala, and Santa Fe. There's a colorful planned disorder about it that hints of bargains to be found. A huge collection of Mexican pottery—everything one of a kind—starts at $10, for a small mug, and goes up to $75, for a large platter or bowl. All of it is from the workshop of Gorky Gonzalez, a Mexican who studied in Japan but whose pottery nevertheless follows the traditional Spanish style of ceramics—Talavera. The background is gray, and the designs tend toward freehand feather strokes, stripes, and vague shapes, in subdued shades of apricot, yellow, green, and blue. Patchwork Guatemalan bedspreads have brilliant colors alternating with black squares, and no two are alike; a double is $125, a queen $150. They dazzle without jarring. Then, there's an entrepreneur down in San Miguel de Allende who pays the villagers to return twenty-eight-hundred-gram empties of La Costeña jalapeños (La Costeña is the most popular brand) and recycles them as watering cans. Even some of the handles are made of recycled tin, and the cans are very jolly; $20. A queen-size bed from Santa Fe made by Native Americans out of saplings and tree trunks the size of fence posts is a serious bed: the entire Jets team could flop on it with impunity. The wood is aspen. It is a bed that would not go unnoticed; $700.

Farther north on Greene Street is Zona, at No. 97 (Spring), where the first things to catch the eye are incunabula for the library: Big Little Books, such as Dick Tracy and Jack Armstrong, for $45 apiece. Six thick straw placemats—rectangles with the corners lopped off—are $26; a peacock-feather duster is $28; wooden lobster buoys from Maine, in colors weathered by Mother Nature, are $48, and could serve as doorstops. The rain sticks here are South American Indian, are made of bamboo, and are from two to three feet long and from three to four inches in diameter. They are bound with brilliant-colored twine—Shocking pink, purple, bright blue, turquoise—and the strings are finished with wooden beads; $58 and $78, and not for the kiddies.

Contemporary Porcelain, 105 Sullivan Street (Spring), goes in more for the artistic than for the practical. The downside of many handmade porcelain wares is that they may be objects of beauty but if they are used they have a short life expectancy in most households. The work of Jeannie Mah offered here is a case in point. Her beautiful, translucent porcelain containers, in the palest colors, are so thin that they are suitable only for holding air. They are the shape of artfully skewed pitchers. One has a wavy tab handle—not to be trusted—and the colors are a subtle pink and a gray that bleed from light to dark; $120 and $135. Somewhat more substantial is a small yellow bowl by Anne Fallis-Elliott, with a rippled edge, noteworthy because of its pleasing color and shape. It could hold nuts or whipped cream, and costs $40. Some playful cockeyed candlesticks, by Arlene Ancona, are made of slip-cast blocks of different shapes and colors built up like children's blocks into a tottery construction. They look as though they were going to fall over, but are engineered not to; $50 for a single, $70 for a double.

KEESAL & MATHEWS, 1244 Madison Avenue (89th), sells a red-wine glass with a flared rim which looks more expensive than it is; $14.75. The fancier Monticello water goblet here has a short stem and is fluted, with a cut-glass band; $16.95. Both can go in the dishwasher. Floorcloths were popular in this country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and some small ones here are meant to be put in front of the kitchen sink, or any other spot that sees heavy duty. They are handmade of treated canvas (like a Barbour jacket) and hand-painted with fruits, flowers, or a hunt scene, on a white background, and are moppable; $97.50 to $125. A silver-plated wire stand, from France, in the shape of a pyramid is designed to hold apples, pears, or oranges. There are nine compartments on the ground tier, six on the second, and three on top, with a ring for carrying. Filled with apples, it makes a decorative, edible centerpiece; $87.50. An olivewood picnic set consisting of a six-inch spoon, a fork, and a spreader could be used as a canapé-serving set. Simple shapes, and they feel so smooth; $17.50. A silver-plated spoon rest in the King pattern is a clip with two grooves which attaches to the edge of a bowl to keep the serving implements from falling in; $15. Many gift shops have taken to selling a comestible or two on the side, attractive packaging being fifty per cent of the appeal. Here coarse sea salt in a glass cylinder with a cork top is $11.50; Five Pepper Blend, similarly packaged, is $16.95. The glass Christmas Sugar Shaker contains red and green sugar, for sprinkling on cookies; $11.25. Four blocks north, at 1320 Madison Avenue, Adrien Linford sells a silver-plated ashtray that would be a boon to smokers and non-smokers alike. It is the shape of a beach pebble and has a hinged lid with a built-in cigarette rest on the inside. It fits nicely and discreetly in the hand, and is eminently portable; $18.

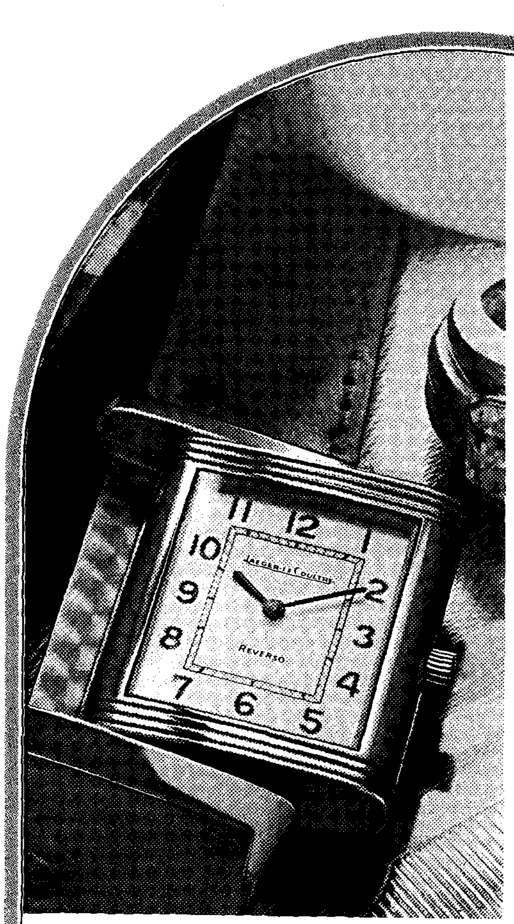


One could say that Frank McIntosh's gift shop, at Henri Bendel, has been expanded in the new store, in that there's less danger of knocking things over with an errant elbow. Pieces by Russian designers are beginning to be imported, and Mr. McIntosh has given a place of honor to a large glass centerpiece designed by a Siberian artisan. (He lives in Siberia by choice, one gathers.) It's twenty inches in diameter, and consists of a ruby bowl with a sort of outsized cobalt-blue collar. There are cutouts on the inside edge of the collar, which render it useless as a serving bowl. It's odd and distinctive; $600. Also from Russia is a covered pitcher of ruby glass, with its handle and the finial of its lid made of clear glass. It comes with two ruby tumblers, and costs $30. A Picasso goblet is a small clear-glass tumbler, on a long twisted stem, that has a Picasso-style face on two sides. The stems come in various colors, such as acid yellow, ruby, amethyst, and turquoise. They don't go in the dishwasher, but, Mr. McIntosh says, "they fly out of the store," which is interesting in view of the fact that one costs $95. Emma Bridgewater, married to Matthew Rice (of Rice Paper, and the former partner of Viscount Linley), is a heavy hitter here. Her pottery is English Trad—or, to be more accurate, English Faux Trad. A black-and-white butter keeper is $58, and a pitcher that says "Jersey Cream—Best Quality" on one side is $60. Another line of her country pottery comes in four patterns, of which the one featuring yellow-and-orange lilies on a cream background is the prettiest; a dinner plate is $28.50, an extra-large teapot is $85.50, and a magnificent soup tureen is $175. A low silver-plated candlestick designed by Caterina Poccianti, a descendant of the Medici (Mr. McIntosh is up on the genealogy of his venders), holds a single candle, and is surrounded by branches that contain fluted glass bud vases. Under full sail, it would be lovely, if a bit ladylike; $175 for the six-vial model, and $265 for the nine-vial.

Tapestry table linen is understandably a big deal here. Forest Party is a topper—so called because it's supposed to be put over another, larger tablecloth, and not really meant to be eaten off. It features rabbits in bow ties, squirrels, and partridges cavorting against a background of greens. The reds are rich, and it's handsome; sixty inches square, and $215. Placemats in several patterns—paisley, fruits and flowers, bunnies, ribbons and fruit—range from $28.50 to $32.50 apiece. Of a quite different nature is a collection of "Mondrian / Jackson Pollock" (Mr. McIntosh's words) placemats. They are made of a composition material resembling felt, and the design is hand-knotted and then pressed. They are large and loud, and can be washed in the gentle cycle; $25. Mats of woven polypropylene strips in a choice of shiny metallic colors can go in the *dishwasher*. These, too, fly out of the store, but then the price is $5. A doorstop-size painted wooden pig—pigs are popular this year—is $70.

Bergdorf Goodman is selling some unusual plates from Provence, in two shades of mustard—slabs three-eighths of an inch thick, each on four little clay feet. They have slanted two-inch rims, and have been sparsely and sketchily hand-painted with wildflowers, birds, or vines and berries. A plate eight inches square is $68, and one eleven inches square is $95. Either could be used as a serving plate.

Barneys is pushing some far-out pottery by an Englishwoman named Mary Rose Young—"the next Clarice Cliff of England," we were told. The motifs are flowers, spots, and squig-



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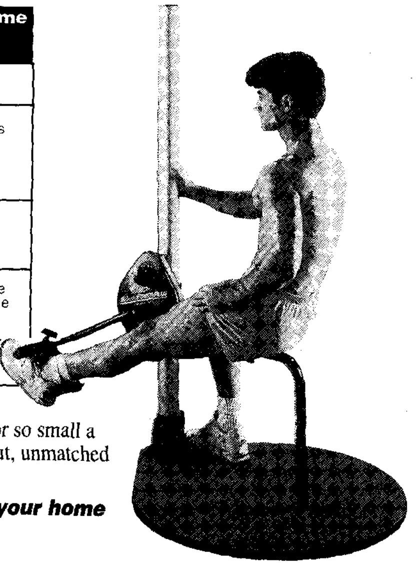


gles—more Red Grooms than Clarice Cliff. They are wild. There are teapots, pitchers, and bowls. A six-inch pitcher with a roselike flower appliquéd on the lip is $110; a rose-encrusted teapot is $550. Barneys also sells a twelve-and-a-half-inch plate, by Christophe, in a glorious persimmon color, for $50.

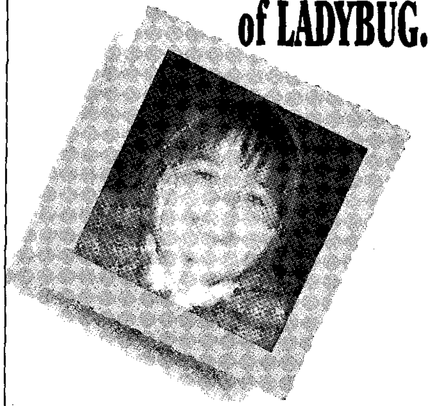
TWO PANS: Williams-Sonoma, which now has three stores in Manhattan, is promoting a non-stick, cast-aluminum frying pan that *browns.* The first of its kind, it's made by Berndes, a German company. It's heavy, and built to last. The pan has a non-stick surface on the outside as well as the inside, a wooden handle, a small cast handle on the front, for easier carrying, and a glass lid. There are six sizes of skillet and sauté pan; a nine-and-a-half-inch skillet is $60, and its lid is $18. N.B.: Shoppers should not forget the Williams-Sonoma Outlet Center, 231 Tenth Avenue (23rd). Williams-Sonoma is the umbrella covering the Pottery Barn, Chambers, Hold Everything, and Gardener's Eden, and selected merchandise from all five stores is sold at reduced prices here. You won't find that frying pan, but this is a place to keep in mind, particularly when buying in quantity.

Macy's sells a wok called High Performance, by Maxim, that has a Teflon coating and a sixteen-hundred-watt unit that heats up in five minutes and provides almost instant heat recovery, which is essential to frying. The drawbacks of a wok are that it takes up so much space and is a nuisance to clean. This one can go in the dishwasher, in spite of having wooden handles and a wooden knob, and there is an optional storage bag, which, stupidly, has to be ordered from the company but is worth the trouble for those who want to get the wok out of the way. The wok is eleven and a half inches in diameter and costs $65. The bag is $8. Macy's also has the only perfect all-purpose wineglass that we've been able to find in New York. Head for the shelves with the glasses that are handmade in Romania, and zero in on the European Red Wine, six and five-eighths inches high, three and one-eighth inches in diameter. This glass has a lot going for it: a stem that is neither too thick nor too thin, the right proportion of bowl to stem, and a bowl that slants in minimally at the top. It's $6.50.

WILLIAM-WAYNE, 324 East 9th Street, continues to assemble a collection of gifts that are both appealing and not beyond the dreams of avarice. Some lighting fixtures, for example: a kerosene lamp eighteen inches high is a hand-blown reproduction made in Mexico; $20. A slender candlestick of rusted metal is $30. A squarish wooden wastebasket, lacquered a burnt ochre and hand-painted with black vines, is $55. A twig doormat that has been outside the door of the shop for over a year has borne up well, and new ones can be bought inside. They are approximately two feet by three, and look great; $37.50. A mercury-glass Bewitching Ball (balls are all the rage this year), to be used in the garden to scare away animals, is $55, for one about the size of a beach ball, and $42.50, for a slightly smaller one. A small painted table, eight inches square, is just right for a drink, a plant, or a Big Little Book; $30. A crystal "bundle" pitcher, bearing a striking resemblance to one at Tiffany's, is $35. A tape measure in a silver-plated shell is $12.50. A wooden box that looks like an old book is $30. An herbal neck roll that could go in the living room as well as the bedroom is covered in green, burgundy, gold, or blue Italian damask and is only *faintly* aromatic; $50. Among the Christmas decorations sold here are some small painted cork-and-felt clip-on birds. They are all a little different, and they are sweet; $3. Three shiny red sleigh bells with a dark-green grosgrain ribbon are $20. For something to eat, try a seven-ounce tin of small palmiers, from the Grafton Goodjam Company, of Grafton, Vermont. (They're the people who put up the vinegar with herbs and other plant life floating in it.) The palmiers are buttery and delicious. The tin is wrapped in black-and-white paper depicting a medieval kitchen and is tied with raffia, and the whole package is a treat for the eye as well as the taste buds; $13.

WHEN it comes to recycling, antique stores have been at it for years, and the Salvage Barn, 523 Hudson Street (10th), is one that doesn't put on airs. Strictly speaking, it deals in vintage goods—treasures from the attic rather than the front parlor. Last

An expert on children's literature gives her opinion of LADYBUG.



Ladybug
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month, an old pine washstand was $130; a pair of narrow, graceful copper candlesticks was $95; a porcelain dish of an irregular leaf shape, with painted leaves and cherries, and with a twenties-era bamboo handle, from Kyoto, was $25. A pair of nickel-plated tea-table lamps with metallic fringed shades, from the Waldorf-Astoria, was $150; two bronze three-light French sconces were $285. It's a place to drop in on from time to time.

Kitschen, 15 Christopher Street (Greenwich Avenue), is a spinoff of U.S.E.D., on Perry Street, but less expensive. The shop is stuffed with kitchenware from the twenties up to the seventies. There are cookie jars, novelty glasses, and jokey salt-and-pepper sets, but some of the items are anything but kitschy. A small white double boiler, once available at Woolworth but no longer, turned up here for $22. A heavy Italian clamp cheese grater is $20; a three-egg poacher is $12; a two-quart Hall coffeepot is $45; a wooden two-step stool made by loving hands is $55. Anyone in pursuit of a present for someone with a kitchen will not go away empty-handed.

A new store in the West Village, Danal Provisions, 2 Bank Street, was started by Daniel Saltiel and Albert Volk, owners of the East Village café Danal. It's a general store, without yard goods, but with just about everything else: produce, cheese, fresh pasta, tea, coffee, biscuits, table linen, pottery, candles, kitchen aids, and dairy products, and firewood from Hunts Point, cut and packed in burlap bags by young people from the Bronx. Each sack is tagged with a "King of the Bronx" postcard and signed by the person who packed it. The profits go to a scholarship fund; $5.50 for a ten-pound bag.

Pierre Deux Antiques, 369 Bleecker Street (Charles), is still owned by the deux Pierres, who recently sold their chain of fabric stores, including Pierre Deux on Madison Avenue. Fine French-provincial antiques, at commensurate prices, are these Pierres' bag, but they also have a good collection of "smalls"—affordable eighteenth- and nineteenth-century decorative accessories. Some nineteenth-century French clothespins, made of walnut, and five or six inches long, would raise the tone of any clothesline; $15 apiece. Preserving jars of blue-green glass with white porcelain clamp tops are

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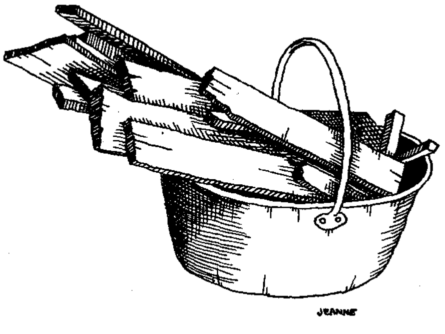
$75 each. Some waxed-pine boxes from a French haberdashery would be excellent for storing things besides "*culottes interlok avec jambes—toutes tailles*" (the labels are still attached), and cost from $75 to $95. A nineteenth-century bellows is $150.

Marjorie Lawrence, who owns The Pillowry, 19 East 69th Street, was an art major at Smith in the forties. At some point in her life, she spent five years in search of a rug for her living room. After looking all over the world, she found one on Madison Avenue, but in the meantime she had learned a lot about Oriental rugs and antique fabrics. Twenty years ago, she began designing pillows, and opened her shop. Some of the materials are antique and some are semi-antique (a word she prefers to "vintage"). There are tapestries, paisleys, homespuns, Japanese ikat, silks, kilims, and needlepoints. Most are nineteenth- and twentieth-century, some are eighteenth. She cuts up only damaged rugs and unsalvageable materials, and she repairs whenever possible. A pillow, seven inches by ten, from a semi-antique kilim, is $35; a sixteen-inch-square silk-and-wool Aubusson (nineteenth century) is $3,285. An eighteenth-century Brussels-tapestry pillow, seven inches by eleven, is $475. Small purses are $50 and $75. Everything is made on the premises, and she does custom work. No zippers and no welting. The difference between these pillows and other throw pillows is that these are very classy.

Muriel Clarke, of Trouvaille Française (telephone 737-6015), recently acquired "some interesting, lively linens" from a food stylist who had collected them for decades. They include colored damask tablecloths, napkins, towels, and coverlets, and have what Mrs. Clarke calls "a rich country look." A Basque toile-de-boeuf cloth is white with four sets of pale-blue, yellow, green, and deep-pink stripes. Such cloths were meant to be put over cattle to keep off the flies when they were taken to market. The one here is fresh-looking, and has a wonderful texture; $100. A linen damask cloth with a bee motif—hives, queen bees, and their subjects—is cocoa and natural, and reversible. It's fifty-four inches by seventy-two, and costs $125. A linen damask cloth with a fern-pattern ground and woven turkey-red fern borders, forty-eight inches by seventy-four, is $75. A red-white-and-navy checked tablecloth, with fringe, very old, very American-country, is fifty-two inches by ninety, and also costs $75. Four Czarist Russia napkins that could be used as placemats are of natural linen, with a red-and-pale-blue monogram so elaborate that it is undecipherable; they're $35.

READING material for the home: *Simple Cooking* is a quarterly newsletter by John and Martha Thorne, who live in Maine, and whose primary interest in life is food. Not haute cuisine but simple food made with the best ingredients. "I am not, and never have been, a gourmet," Mr. Thorne writes. The newsletters include essays, recipes, reminiscences, incidental information, pensées, pertinent literary references, and a supplement, "Mange Tout," that reviews food books. Each issue has a theme—mushrooms, breadmaking, la cuisine créole. It's well written, direct, and personal. A sample of the prose: "To understand this relationship between Russians and mushrooms, you must first grasp that the latter are, before anything else, a *gift*. Like Easter eggs, they are something put there to be discovered, hidden for the pleasure of being found." A one-year subscription is $16; P.O. Box 88, Steuben, Maine 04680. For those who prefer the spoken word to the printed, "Great Speeches of the 20th Century" (Rhino), a boxed set of four CDs, is $47 at HMV. Listen and weep.

Peipers+Kojen, 1023 Lexington Avenue (73rd), sells the greatest little time-waster to come on the market since television. It's a perpetual calendar, called Pillars of Time, good for the years 1600 to 2299; it enables you to figure out what day of the week you were born on, or whether Bing Crosby was born full of woe or had far to go, or what day of the week the year 2000 starts on (Saturday). It's French, and made of wood and recycled paper, and it comes in a neat-looking recycled-cardboard case; $45.



This year's ubiquitous Christmas gifts are a baseball and a designer toothbrush. The baseball is two-toned (including pink-and-white) pearlized leather, and is $20 all over town. It is not clear what one does with these balls other than admire them. The designer toothbrush is by Philippe Starck, perhaps better known for the Royalton and the Paramount hotels than he is for his "biomorphic Fluocaril . . . dental instrument." The handle resembles a streamlined feather, and comes in sherbet colors. The brush is garaged in a gray plastic base that looks like the stools that circus animals perform on. It costs anywhere from $10 to $15, and Ad Hoc Softwares sells it for $10.

There is an oversupply of Christmas candles at this time of year, and some of them are nice. Dean & DeLuca has red beeswax candles in two sizes: four by two inches ($12) and eight by two inches ($24). Four twelve-inch green beeswax tapers are $14, and a candle in the form of a fat Red Delicious apple is $9. Royal Copenhagen/Georg Jensen, 683 Madison Avenue (61st), has come up with some all-year-round candles that last eight hours, and are self-extinguishing when they've burned down to an inch from the bottom. (No more cracked glass candlesticks.) They come in white, red, and five other colors; four for $5. A box of twelve pleated aluminum papers to wrap around the base of a candle are an improvement on the hand-cut strips of paper towel most people use to insure a tight fit; it's $1.

As for wrapping paper and ribbon, Kate's Paperie, 8 West 13th Street, is the place for both klutzes and professionals, and for the environmentally concerned as well as the unconcerned. The store stocks more than eight hundred papers, starting with packages of tissue paper ($2) and soaring to handmade Japanese paper with real butterflies, ferns, and leaves incorporated in it ($36.50 a sheet). But the management has been thinking green. Recycled kraft paper called Renaissance comes in more than ten patterns, at $2.50 a sheet. A hipper recycled paper, from Australia, has a primitive, spacey design in natural browns and neutrals, and is $2 a sheet. A *huge* skein of natural or colored raffia costs $15, and should last a lifetime. The store also has kraft boxes in different sizes and shapes, from $9, for a small round box, to $70, for a hatbox. Among the small presents available here are three erasers shaped like oval guest soaps and done up in a traditional Japanese gift wrapping of dark-green crinkled paper tied with raffia; $9.95. Another is a terra-cotta bell with a raffia bow and a grapevine hanger; $5.95. Best of all is a box the size of an orange because it *is* an orange, turned inside out and smoothed down. It feels good, looks good, and smells good; $21. Katherine Tiddens would approve.

For writing gift cards, or for any kind of Christmas correspondence, all ages might appreciate a box of Crayola's Markers in their stocking. The points are neither too broad nor too narrow, and the Markers come in eight "classic" colors, by which is meant red, blue, yellow, green, purple, orange, brown, and black—not cranberry, military, maize, spruce, amethyst, bittersweet, pinecone, and ebony—for around $4 per box.

THE CHRISTMAS TABLE

THE aforementioned orange boxes can also be bought at Robert Homma William Lipton, 27 East 61st Street, filled with crystallized orange peel; $35. Lemon boxes filled with candied peel are the same price, and grapefruit boxes filled with peel are $55. The peels are crystallized by Anne Rosenzweig, of the restaurant Arcadia. One of these boxes satisfies four out of five senses (happily, they don't play "Jingle Bells") and is an ideal present. The orange boxes, filled with candied peel by Maureen Higgins and tied with colored waxed-linen twine and a lemon leaf, are available at Manhattan Fruitier, 210 East 6th Street; $25. Manhattan Fruitier also offers a self-destructing garland of thin slices of dried Empire and Golden Delicious apples strung on raffia, with two curls of cinnamon at each end; it's twelve inches long and costs $15. There are two sizes of Grand Tour Boxes (updated versions of steamer baskets) here, made of basswood or pine. They are filled with fresh fruit, elegantly decorated with leaves and French ribbon, and tied with red waxed twine. (Waxed twine is where gift-wrapping is at this year.) A box nine inches by twelve by four is $65; a twelve-by-sixteen-by-four-inch box also has chocolates, and is $100. Because of the contents' perishability, the quality of the boxes is guaranteed only for next-day delivery. A fruitcake made by Ms. Higgins, a dab hand with fruitcakes, is soused in cognac and is packed in a brown carton tied with the waxed twine; $15 for a three-quarter-pound loaf and $30 for a one-and-a-half-pound loaf. The standards at Manhattan Fruitier are very high, as to both quality and presentation.

Giorgio DeLuca's idea of a nice little present is a small bottle of aged-in-the-wood balsamic vinegar, a substance to which he is addicted. He has five such vinegars; they are the color of liquid mahogany, are very smooth-tasting, have a rich, thick consistency, and, at prices ranging from $60 to $155 a pop (seven ounces), are to be doled out with an eyedropper. Somewhat more modest in price is a bottle of slightly carbonated water from Wales. Although there must be almost as many bottled waters as there are mustards, this one, Tŷ Nant spring water, stands out. It comes in absolutely plain brilliant-blue (what the buyer described as Noxzema blue and Giorgio prefers to call cobalt blue) glass bottles, which are shaped like wine bottles; $3.25 for twenty-five ounces, $1.95 for eleven. Ronnybrook Farm milk, from a chemical-free farm upstate, comes in glass bottles and is available at several stores for around $3.25 a quart, either regular (unhomogenized) or skimmed. The milk is superior—particularly the skimmed, which tastes like regular milk without being rich. You get $1 back on the bottle from D. & D., and the shop has foresightedly laid in a supply of heavy-wire milk carriers with wooden handles—just the article for delivering milk or Tŷ Nant spring water. The two-bottle size is $20, the four-bottle $30, and, complete with bottles, and with a ribbon tied around the handle, either would make an unusual and delightful gift. For the customer who really gets into it, there is a canvas bag with the Ronnybrook logo and canvas compartments for empties; $14.95. Grafton Goodjam's palmiers are here for $12.95, and a four-ounce tin of dolls' cookies, called Beth's Babies, filled with either ginger or lemon "buttons" the size of a nickel,

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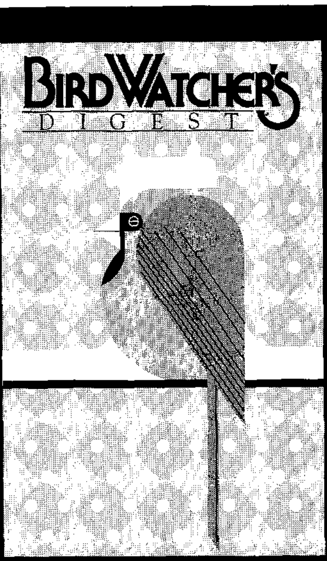

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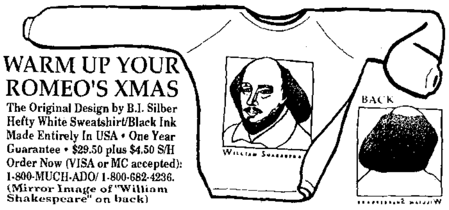

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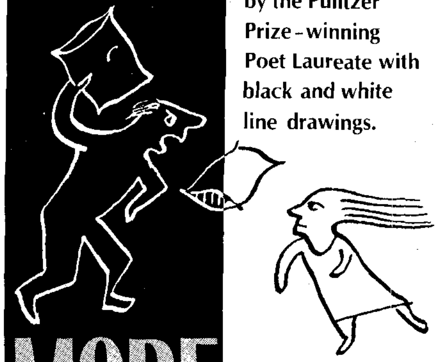

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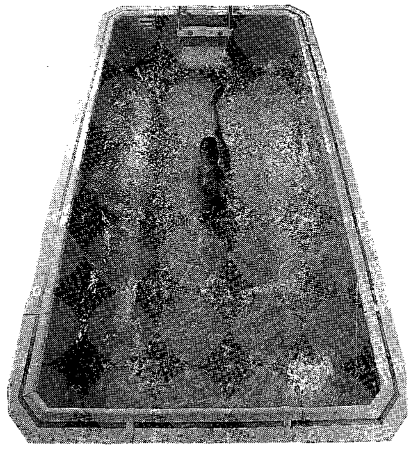

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Steven Jenkins, who is very much in charge of D. & D.'s cheese department, and wears his white hat at precisely the same angle as Fred Astaire in "Follow the Fleet," has more or less invented a new cheese—aged Teleme. This cheese is made in California, and when young is like a Monterey Jack. Mr. Jenkins ages it for at least three months, in a controlled environment in the cellar, turning it over every other day until it becomes a rich, runny cheese reminiscent of Vacherin but more like "nuts, leather, wood, blackberries, and tobacco," to quote Mr. Jenkins. Don't bother to buy it unless the Master says it's ready; $16 a pound. A cheese to keep in mind if the Teleme isn't pronounced ready is the St.-Marcellin, a ripened cow's-milk cheese the size of a hockey puck. It packs a wallop, and three ounces of it is only $4.65. A six-ounce organic chèvre, slightly aged but still creamy and rindless, from the Brier Run Farm in West Virginia, is like a Petit Suisse (France's answer to cream cheese); $4.50 each.

In the *salumeria* department, where Carmine (late of Balducci's) presides, we tasted five hams, all first-rate: applewood ($12 a pound); Jamón Serrano, which means Spanish-style ($14); imported Black Forest ($14); Prosciutto de Parma ($21); and air-dried venison ($35). Together, they would create quite a splash on a buffet table. D. & D. makes an excellent country pâté of veal and pork, with sun-dried cherries to cut the specific gravity; $16 a pound. Among the sweets, a cranberry-apple-walnut tart with a short crust is exemplary (a four-inch is $5, an eight-inch is $15), but there are three winners: a Paris-Brest, or cream puff, as light as a sigh ($1.50); a St. Honoré, which is the same thing, only bigger, and looks like a flattened croquembouche (one that feeds from six to eight is $25); and, the simplest of all, Five Golden Rings, almond tea cakes baked in baby ring molds and packed in a white box ($9.50 for five).

At Balducci's, 424 Sixth Avenue (9th), Andy Balducci told us that the fish of the nineties is triggerfish, a spiny, sweet-fleshed fish from the tropics; $4.99 a pound. According to Tony Castagnazzi, in Balducci's fish department, the fish of the nineties is arctic char, an alternative to wild trout or salmon; $9.99 a pound. What everyone at Balducci's is agreed on is that the best (and the most expensive) beef in the world is Wagyu beef, sometimes called Kobe beef, from Japan; $109 a pound. The other big excitement at Balducci's is Margaret Skaife tomatoes, from California, with a money-back guarantee. Not only are they red but they have flavor and they're juicy with none of that seedy green glop inside; they are the best news on the tomato front in years. They aren't quite as juicy as a vine-ripened New Jersey tomato in August (if you can find one), but that's quibbling; $2.98 a pound. Salmon roe from the Pacific Northwest, which until recently was sold only to the Japanese, is noticeably more delicate and less salty than other salmon roe; $20 a pound. A whole lobe of duck foie gras is $80 a pound; a lobe of goose foie gras is $96 a pound.

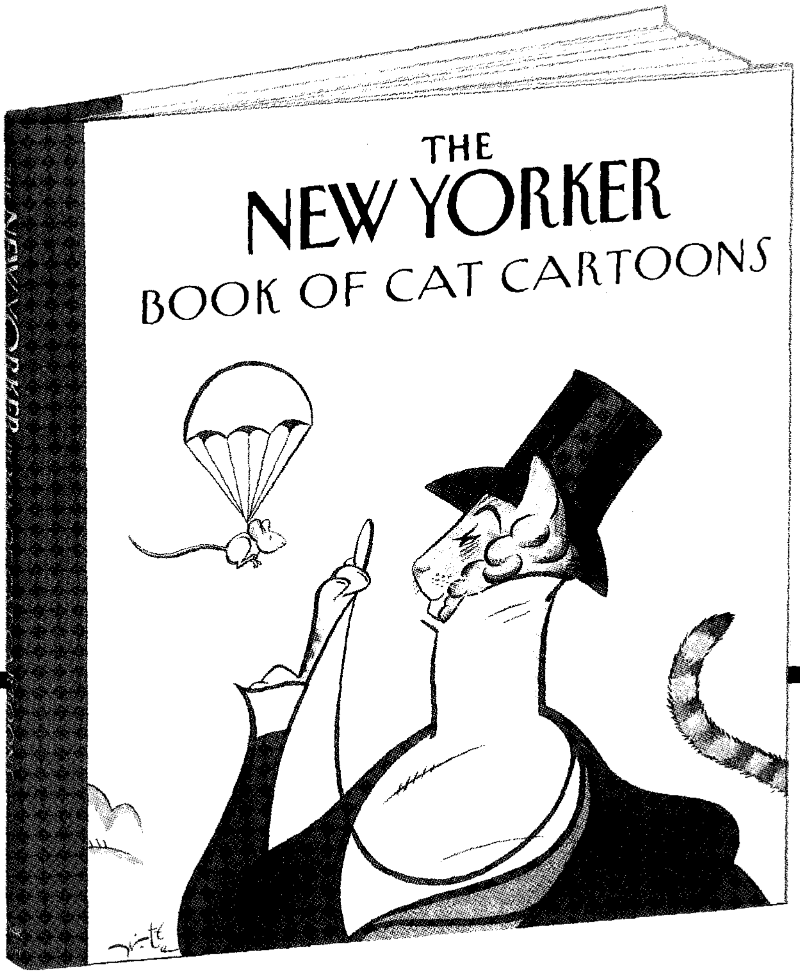
In the cheese department, they are selling rocky slabs of Reggiano Parmesan, with a Parmesan knife, wrapped together and tied with a Balducci's ribbon. The slabs weigh about three pounds, and a slab would make a handsome present to oneself as well as to somebody else; $10.99 a pound. Ricotta al Forno, or baked sheep's-milk ricotta, with a brown crust, is a breakfast cheese, traditional in Italy for the holidays. A whole one weighs approximately three pounds; $10.99 a pound.

Glensfoot is another chemical-free upstate farm, and Ronnybrook's rival for shelf space in the city. Balducci's stocks Glensfoot ice cream in six flavors, but we have never got beyond the Glensfoot vanilla, which tastes the way homemade vanilla ice cream used to taste upstate. Balducci's also carries eight fancy ice creams and sorbets from Out of a Flower, out of Dallas—a company that specializes in ice creams and sorbets made from edible flowers and herbs, all of them "natural, fresh, organically grown." There are thirty-six flavors, and the colors are ravishing. Each tastes exactly as advertised—there are no fake tastes—and we particularly liked the red-ginger-and-port ice cream and the peach-and-champagne-with-mint sorbet. Prices range from $6.95 to $7.95 a pint, and anyone who would like to try other flavors—rosé wine and opal basil, say—can always order them direct from

Texas. (Telephone 214 754-0324.) The madeleines at Balducci's, from California, would be a nice accompaniment to any of these ice creams or sorbets; $12.95 a pound.

WHAT many people need during the holidays, besides a helper, is to know that if fatigue comes to desperation the components of a meal can be ordered up. A number of places 'round the city are happy to oblige. One of them is the Cleaver Company, 229 West Broadway (White), whose Christmas menu is strictly for grownups. Among the highlights are individual pastry shells filled with roast venison, onions, and baby vegetables—a switch from the usual Christmas fare. Each shell has a lid with a reindeer embossed in the center, and the calibre of the pastry is such that it could be eaten alone, with the stew on the side; $22.50 each. The Swiss-chard-and-red-mustard timbales could be served with anything; $4 each. Mary Cleaver, whose vanilla-bean bread pudding with Tipsy Fruit Sauce should be kept in mind for all occasions, has a new cake this year: Chocolate Chestnut Marjolaine, based on the classic dessert of Fernand Point, of La Pyramide. It consists of six thin layers of Japonnaise (egg whites, nuts, and chestnut flour) interspersed with alternating layers of rum chestnut cream, rum whipped cream, and chocolate-and-chestnut buttercream; the whole thing is covered in the chocolate-and-chestnut buttercream and topped with a chocolate ganache—oh, and decorated with small roasted chestnuts that have been given an edible gold wash. Totally awesome; $16 for a piece that will serve four.

A more traditional and less adventurous Christmas dinner is to be had at Maureen's Passion Foods, 1200 Lexington Avenue (81st), a new kid on the block. The chef, Sergio Ceragioli, from Northern Italy, and all the cooking is done on the premises. The Christmas and New Year's menu starts off with such golden oldies as a platter of smoked salmon or steamed shrimp ($9 per serving), and progresses through roast turkey ($3.75 a pound) or suckling pig ($12 a pound) to plum pudding with hard sauce, a bûche de Noël or assorted Christmas cookies ($3 per person). Of particular interest to the harried cook are the gravies (giblet, $4 a pint; porcini, $9) and the stuffings



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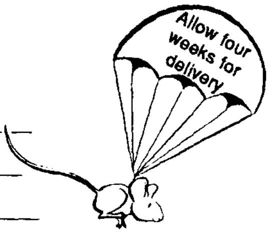
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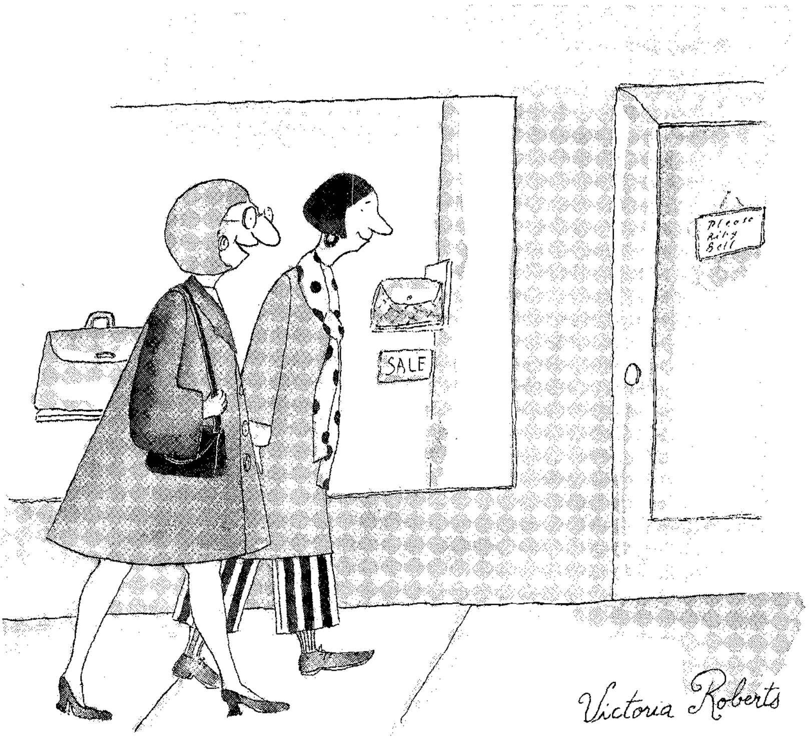

"You can add 'Men who say "Ciao!" who are not even Italian or of Italian descent' to that list."

• •

(country, $6 a pound; sausage, $7). The shop also has takeout, and there are plenty of choices—the menu changes every day. Delivery is free anywhere in Manhattan. (Well, not two cheese sticks, but any reasonable order.)

COMFORT and joy for iconoclasts:

> The making and eating of mince pies and Christmas pudding on Christmas Day is a contravention of a law passed by Cromwell's Long Parliament. It describes both dishes as "abominable and idolatrous confections to be avoided by Christians," and renders offenders subject to heavy fines, imprisonment, or both.
> —*Country Life*, Dec. 6, 1990.

To which legions would add "Hear! Hear!" We direct the remaining minority to the plum pudding made by an Englishwoman, Susan Kluger, at Soutine, 104 West 70th Street; a pudding weighing one and a half pounds, in a white crock, is $22. Or head for Myers of Keswick, 634 Hudson Street (Horatio), where the long-anticipated James Robertson cannonball Christmas pudding, "made from a luxury recipe," has finally been off-loaded. It comes to you direct from Manchester, packed in a bright-green hexagonal box with cellophane windows on three sides. Inside, the ball is wrapped first in a cloth, then in red cellophane with holly leaves. Instructions for serving are enclosed (two and a half hours' steaming in the oven, or seven minutes in the microwave). One weighing a little over two and a half pounds is $19.50; a much smaller, squat version weighs a pound and is $7.95.

Oven and a Basket (formerly Ruth Ann's Bake Shop and, before that, Kathleen's), 155 East 84th Street, will, given a week's notice, make two French specialties to order: a croquembouche and a bûche de Noël. The former is decorated with edible gold ribbons and spun sugar but otherwise looks homemade. The puffs are filled with a choice of three fillings: whipped cream, chocolate ganache, or lemon buttercream; $80 for one that will serve thirty. The bûche is a sort of California bûche—all white, with an orange-scented biscuit sponge and a white-chocolate-buttercream-and-lemon-curd filling, frosted with white-chocolate buttercream, and decorated with holly made of white chocolate. Christmas lights replace elves and mushrooms; $75 for a bûche that would serve fifteen. Fans of Kathleen's doughnut holes, a.k.a. Crutchley's Cruller Hearts, will be relieved to hear that these delectable mouthfuls are delivered four times a week both here and to Canard & Company, 1292 Madison Avenue (92nd); a bag of fifteen is $3.50, and powdered sugar is included in a separate bag.

Those in the market for a somewhat lighter dessert might consider the cranberry upside-down cake at Neuman & Bogdonoff, 1385 Third Avenue (78th). The cakes are also made with blueberries, apples, or pineapple (and a dab of Glensfoot would be just the thing); one four inches in diameter is $3, and an eight-inch is $15. Large Christmas cookies decorated in five brilliant colors feature Santa Claus (eight inches high), a trimmed tree (seven inches high), and a reindeer (shorter but wider). Although firm, these cookies are edible, as was recently demonstrated by parents we know who were entrusted with two of them for their children. The tree was eaten by the father, and the reindeer by the mother, without apology; $12.50 for Santa, $10 for the tree or the reindeer. Paul Neuman would like it noised about that he has taken over the store next door, and customers no longer have to contend with gridlock at No. 1385.

ELI ZABAR's forte is bread. What he does is tack the word "Christmas" in front of various specialties and then, quite rightly, promote them as "nifty presents." The Christmas rolls at E.A.T., 1064 Madison Avenue (81st), are soft, eggy, buttery round rolls, with fresh dill and onions, that appear to have been heavily shellacked. They need no butter, and are excellent alone or made into a smoked-salmon or egg-salad sandwich; small rolls are fifty cents, large ones are $1. The same dough also comes in frozen, uncooked, unshellacked loaves, with baking instructions; $5 each. The dough has no whole grains, and will freeze well, even after it's been baked. Five-grain mini Health Rolls are baked in packs of twelve, then put in plastic bags. They can be toasted, and are very filling; $5 a dozen. Organic-whole-wheat scones the size of English muffins, with English currants, are $1 apiece. A loaf of olive bread, with bits of black olives and olive oil, is $3.50. The Arafat, a sort of pizza turban, is made with leftover country-bread dough, and spread with fresh tomatoes, Parmesan, and olive oil; a seven-inch round is $6.50. All these breads are marvellous, and anyone with a large freezer would do well to stock up. Eli is into Ronnybrook cream; he uses nothing else. The pommes de terre dauphinoises, which he plays down as Potato Pie, contain potatoes cooked in Ronnybrook cream, with a soupçon of garlic and Gruyère cheese; one of them serves from four to six, and costs $15. His macaroni and cheese elevates that cafeteria warhorse to celestial heights: medium-sized ziti, cream, Gruyère, Parmesan, and "plenty of crunchies on top, because they're the best part," Eli told us, dipping in. The family size would serve eight or ten, and costs $25; the junior size, for six, is $15. A boned leg of baby lamb, with the long shank bone left in as a handle for the carver, is covered with pepper, garlic, and fresh herbs, and roasted on a spit in Eli's favorite toy, the rotisserie. A leg weighs from four to five pounds, and is available only whole; $25 a pound. The Florentines are thin, crisp, and chewy, studded with apricots, raisins, and almond chips. The fruit is soaked in rum before baking; a quarter of a pound, or about fifteen cookies, is $10. The Christmas cakes, made by the pastry chef, Luis Zurita, are unique. A rich chocolate cake with chocolate frosting has touches of white frosting piped around the base, and is decorated with cutout farm animals, in both dark and white chocolate, that stand up on the top. Or, if you prefer, you can order cutouts of stars and Christmas trees. The animals are packed separately—in position, they don't travel well—to be put on the cake when they are very cold. A nine-inch cake is $25; a six-inch is $20.

IF you want to branch out from Terra Chips (a ten-ounce bag is $5.98 at Zabar's) and pistachio nuts (a five-pound bag is $23.95 at Zabar's, where else), Likitsakos Market, 1174 Lexington Avenue (81st), makes five unusually good dips to be served with either pita bread or crudités: guacamole, hummus, tzatziki (yogurt and dill, with either cucumber or sun-dried tomatoes), and baba ghanouj; $2.99 for half a pound, except for the baba ghanouj, which is $3.99. The small crowd standing around the sampling table appeared to be freeloading lunch. For swank, consider the Czar-cut smoked salmon at Petrossian, 182 West 58th Street. It's center-cut salmon that has been smoked a little longer than usual and comes in thick slices, cut straight through rather than on the bias, to be served in small chunks. (The name has to do with the lavish presentation rather than with historical precedent.) A quarter of a pound, or about fourteen pieces, is $15. Zabar's, on the other hand, sells excellent pre-sliced smoked salmon from Maine, under the name Kendall-Brook. It's Atlantic salmon smoked over hardwood and fruitwood with spices, herbs, and salt. There are flecks of herbs, and it's smokier than most—more like Irish salmon, but not quite so dry—and comes in small and large packages for $19.96 a pound.

For a buffet party, The Cellar, at Macy's, has Gene Hovis's bourbon-baked ham, on the bone, adorned only with a glaze, and sliced spirally for ease in serving; a ham weighing between ten and twelve pounds is $86, and the price includes delivery. Then order a gross of his mini buttermilk biscuits, each the size of a silver dollar, available either plain or with cheddar, for fifteen and thirty-five cents, respectively. These have to be specially ordered; larger biscuits, not so lovable, are thirty-five and sixty-five cents.

Our favorite ham is the pride of Bernard Eloy, a Burgundian who recently moved from New Haven to SoHo and set up shop at 68 Thompson Street (Broome) as Bernard the Butcher. It's a French fresh ham he has treated in some special way that he is not about to reveal. (The words "*pompe*" and "*tok-tok-tok*" were mentioned.) He did say that he uses special salt from France, and that he is the only butcher in the United States to do a ham this way. It is terrific: rosy pink; moist but not slimy; not rich; great flavor. He will be doing up the hams as Christmas presents, trimmed (of most of the fat), decorated, and placed on a wooden board, for which he will reluctantly ask a $12 deposit, the whole wrapped in cellophane with a ribbon and maybe a leaf or two. The hams weigh between ten and thirteen pounds, and will easily serve twenty-five or thirty. He needs six days' notice for a whole ham; $8.50 a pound. A pound of sliced ham is $9.50. As a sideline, Bernard puts up jars of brandied Seckel pears or lady apples; $13.95. Before leaving SoHo, anyone with a hankering for rillettes should stop at Daniel's Market, at 179 Prince Street (Thompson), for his pork rillettes, which are properly made; i.e., shredded. Half a pound is $5. Or some no-fat sausages: chicken with tarragon ($6.95 a pound), turkey with rosemary ($6.95), or rabbit with thyme ($7.50). A small bag of homemade potato chips is twenty-five cents.

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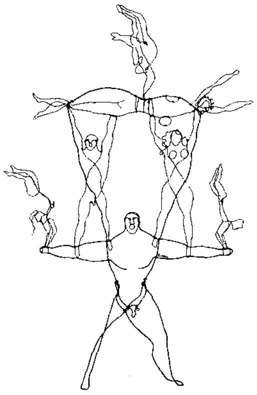

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simply staying home, check out Yura & Company, 1650 Third Avenue (92nd). Take the onion rolls, for example—take three or four. These are yeast rolls with molten onions in the middle, and the temptation is to eat one right after another and forget the rest of the meal; seventy-five cents apiece. For a cocktail party or a buffet, Yura recommends a Smoked Salmon Torta, a sort of upside-down savory cheesecake. A buttered mold with shreds of Gruyère cheese on the bottom is dusted with Parmesan, then filled with a mixture of smoked salmon, cream cheese, onions, eggs, and red peppers, and baked. It's presented on a platter, surrounded by fruit and crackers, and, with other food on tap, would feed a platoon. It manages to be light and filling at the same time; $75. Three fish dishes, all quite different, in ascending order of hauteness: Tuna Provençal is a fresh-tuna ragout with onions, tomatoes, garlic, and herbs ($10 a pint); a salmon tartlet, from a medieval recipe, numbers pears, apples, apricots, raisins, figs, and dates among its ingredients ($6.50); a small trout wrapped in leek, like a Japanese gift, has a stuffing of crab, mushrooms, and raisins ($10.50). The parsnip-and-celery-root purée ($9 a pint) could be served with anything, and should be; it's a lovely surprise. The crab cakes here ($4.50 apiece) should not be overlooked, either, nor should the lemon sorbet ($6 a pint).

David Kron (telephone 722-4508) is a caterer with Paris training who can be hired to cook a whole dinner but is not above sending over just one dish. He will not divulge the ingredients of his chicken sausage, which as a hearty canapé or a first course is wonderful. It's an eight-ounce sausage wrapped in caul fat and deep-fried, and is served with roasted salt and Szechuan pepper. It can be cut into ten slices, and will freeze for as long as six months. The minimum order is five sausages; $18.50 a pound. Meat loaf has become chic. Cooks are hypersensitive about their meat loaves. At a meat-loaf-contest party on Long Island, one guest walked out in a huff, with his meat loaf, and two others were reduced to tears by lack of appreciation of their meat-loaf expertise. Mr. Kron makes a braised meat log of beef and mushrooms, sprinkles it with sautéed mushrooms, and serves it with a tomato-and-porcini sauce. It's the best meat loaf we've ever eaten, and it's up to any occasion; $22.50 a pound, and the minimum order is a pound and a half.

Mortimer's, 1057 Lexington Avenue (75th), has crashed through with some up-market comfort food that can be ordered during the holidays: roast capon (about five and a half pounds; $24.50), Swedish meatballs ($15 for about ten), and a trifle. We haven't sampled the capon, but can testify that the Swedish meatballs are moist and have flavor. They come in a gravy of substance that cries out for mashed potatoes, and these are provided; $6 a pint. The trifle is actually anything but. It's a mixture of sponge cake, custard, whipped cream, a spot of brandy, raspberries, and sliced almonds, and is guaranteed to flatten the guests. (The chef, Steve Attoe, is English, and knows what he's about.) It comes in a glass bowl, and serves ten; $37.50.

OUR vote for Mother's Helper of the Year goes to Lori Oshansky, for starting a company called Frozen Assets (telephone 769-3687; put it in your address book immediately), whose motto is "Fine foods prepared for future consumption." Exactly. Ms. Oshansky began a career in the theatre, and, like many in that uncertain profession, worked in restaurants and for caterers between engagements. She decided to go into business for herself a year ago, and reports that Frozen Assets' products are much in demand—particularly in New Jersey, where, she says, the freezers are apt to be bigger. She changes the menu monthly, and there are always two soups, three main courses, two kinds of muffins or scones, and two desserts. We can vouch wholeheartedly for the soupe au pistou ($7 a quart); the chicken potpie (one that serves two, or three in a pinch, is $9.50); the veal stew with fall vegetables ($12 a quart); the banana-bran, the pumpkin-apple, and the corn muffins, and the dried-cherry scones ($11 a dozen); and, last but not least, the Italian Plum Torte ($12). The crusts are masterly, and, as a resident critic commented, "even the carrots taste good." If Mom has a reputation as a good cook, her constituency will think she made everything herself. Nothing looks store-bought. Instructions for heating and serving are enclosed, and there is a delivery charge for orders under $150, but one can always move to New Jersey.

The frozen American-flatbread pizza

at either Dean & DeLuca or Canard & Company is "all-natural," and comes in three flavors: cheese and garlic and herbs; sun-dried tomatoes with mushrooms; and Revolution, which, mysteriously, turns out to be cheese and mushrooms and onions. The pizzas are made in Waitsfield, Vermont, and are *echt* environmentally correct; they are even packed in recyclable recycled boxes. The extensive prose on the box states that the pizza is "light, crisp, flavorful, and wonderfully convenient," all true; $9.95 at D. & D. and at Canard & Company. An all-vegetable shepherd's pie, available at the Dean & DeLuca Café, in the Paramount Hotel, is filled with artichoke hearts, carrots, leeks, onions, and mushrooms in a very thin crust, with a lid of piped mashed potatoes. It could serve as a meal in itself (lunch) or as a side dish. The minimum order is four pies, and they can be frozen; $6 apiece.

THE pâtisseries are all cranked up for the Christmas season. Natasha Straub, a young Austrian, makes five kinds of bite-size Christmas cookies and, in addition, is offering four six-inch wicked flourless cakes: Chocolate Dekadenz ($17), chocolate fudge and moist chocolate hazelnut pie ($15.50 for either), and Natasha's Chocolate Dream ($10.25). Just add a dollop of Glensfoot vanilla ice cream. She will make them in eight- and ten-inch sizes as well. The cookies, of which the Vanilla-Kipferl ($3.30 a dozen) and the Stars with Red Currants ($3.15) are top faves, are available by the bag at Bazzini, 339 Greenwich Street (Jay), or telephone Natasha at 571-7514. The City Bakery, 22 East 17th Street, is both a café and a takeout shop. The chef, Maury Rubin, got his training at, among other places, Robert Linxe's Maison du Chocolat in Paris. The Bakery is open for breakfast, and the café is worth a special trip for the hot chocolate alone; an eight-ounce cup is $2.25, and a twelve-ounce one is $2.75. Mr. Rubin uses dairy products from Glensfoot, and to mark the holidays, and the City Bakery's first anniversary, he has devised a Celebration Package for six: a dark-chocolate brownie, a black-and-white crème brûlée, an apple-almond tart, a Milky Way tart, a passion-fruit tart, and raspberries in puff pastry with caramelized almonds. The package costs $16, and the portions are generous. (The price for a package that will serve twelve is $30, and for one that will serve twenty it's $55.) Served with the house caramel ice cream ($4.50 a pint), it is a treat. Shelley Boris, who runs the D. & D. Café in the Paramount, and bakes the vegetable shepherd's pie, has a pipeline to Maureen Higgins, in Connecticut, and Maureen now supplies the café with three kinds of steamed pudding—nursery food for grownups, and each one a gem. There's chocolate with almonds (dense), plummy plum (a combination of coarsely chopped fruit and purée), and pumpkin with ginger and orange zest (the lightest of the three); each weighs one pound, will serve eight, and costs $14. Her coconut macaroons are rough and crunchy, and are made with toasted coconut; her mincemeat squares, like little mince pies but light and undoughy, are the perfect size to try on the children ($1 for either).

Robert Linxe, *confiseur extraordinaire*, has had some of his chocolate pastries flown over to his shop La Maison du Chocolat, 25 East 73rd Street. The Tasting Squad was put to work, and its members, after considerable hand-wringing, eventually cast their votes for two. The chocolate-macaroon sandwich, with a chocolate ganache filling, is "light, delicious, crispy outside, rich and chocolaty inside"; $3.50. The Rigoletto Square, or four-layer brownie, incorporates caramel and almonds with the chocolate, and is, one volunteer wrote, "a major contribution to civilization"; $3.50. On the way out, you might gather in a few chocolate truffles (thirty for $25), or perhaps a bag of cocoa powder, with a recipe for "thick French" chocolate (half a pound for $12). The gift wrapping here is simple and stunning: a squat canvas bag or what looks like a small potato sack of burlap, tied with string, costs $15 to $24.

SMALL PRESENTS TO ARRIVE ON THE DOORSTEP WITH

At Black Hound, 149 First Avenue (9th), makers of highly desirable small cookies, cakes, tarts, and candies (especially desirable is the chocolate bark, for $20 a pound), are jars of yellow peaches, white peaches, and pears that no larder should be without. The fruit is put up in Pennsylvania at Black Hound's behest, and is still firm, is not too sweet, and has obviously been peeled by hand. The white peaches are par-

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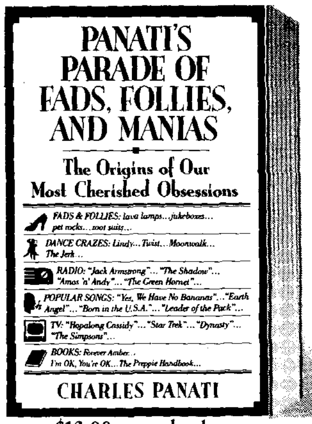

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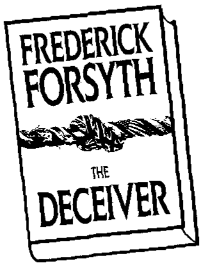

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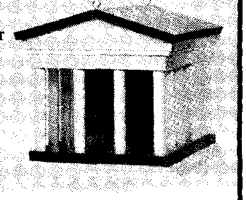

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ticularly good, and the price of a three-pound jar is $10. A jigger of Black Hound's Fermented Raspberry Sauce poured over the fruit would not go amiss; eight ounces for $5. A round faux-Shaker box big enough to hold a chocolate truffle and small enough to go in a stocking is tied with gold ribbon, and costs $1.50, with truffle. Susan Kluger, of plum-pudding fame, will construct a five-by-five-inch box of sugar cookies, cemented together with Royal Icing, and decorated with outlines of Christmas shapes in red and green icing. The box is filled by Madge Rosenberg, of Soutine fame, with her Christmas cookies, and tied with a ribbon. It is charming, and everything except the ribbon is edible; $30. Extra cookies—gingerbread shapes, pecan shortbread, and butter-cookie stars with raspberry jam—can be bought for $12 a pound. Soutine's Della Robbia wreath is a coffee cake filled with cocoa, hazelnuts, sherry, and raisins. It looks like a twisted grapevine (and could be hung on the door briefly) and would serve fifteen to twenty; $20. Ecce Panis, 1120 Third Avenue (65th), makes a fougasse (the French answer to focaccia) in the shape of a Christmas tree and coats it with olive oil and herbs; $6.50. The biscottini here come in four flavors: pistachio-almond, bourbon-pecan with raisins, chocolate dough with macadamia nuts, and blond dough with chocolate and hazelnuts. All are delicious, and hard but not tooth-breaking, and a mixed bag weighing half a pound is $10. Another small present to be eaten, or for table décor, or both, is to be found at Marquet Pâtisserie, 235 Smith Street (near Atlantic Avenue; telephone 718 852-8915), in Brooklyn. It's a small house of dark chocolate, three inches by three by four and a half, set on a round of chocolate, with trees and a fence of chocolate, and there are tiny meringue mushrooms, white-icing icicles, and windows and doors traced in white icing; $20, and a week's notice. Taylor's, 523 Hudson Street (Charles), renowned for its lopsided chocolate-soufflé cakes and its three-inch-square brownies, makes teething toast for Baby; a package of four is ninety-five cents. Merry Christmas!

•

The audience is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.—*Graduation program of Wesleyan University, June 2, 1991.*

Some of those people are still seated.

THE NEW YORKER

LISTS AT THIS SEASON SOME BOOKS BY ITS CONTRIBUTORS PUBLISHED DURING THE YEAR

(All or a considerable part of the contents of each of these volumes first appeared in this magazine.)

Complete Collected Stories, by V. S. Pritchett (*Random House, $35*).

Over the past sixty years, the matchless Sir Victor has turned his gaze on all the characters under Heaven, and here they are: the loquacious widow, the ruined businessman, the rich beauty who drives recklessly and dresses badly, and lovers of all kinds—from the youth who says, "I wished I was in love and the wish itself was delightful," to the straying family man who "was soon out staring at the garden, looking older, as if he were travelling back into his life."

The Last Italian: Portrait of a People, by William Murray (*Prentice Hall, $21.95*).

Mr. Murray deliberately chooses topics generally ignored by guidebooks, such as the drug problem in Rome or the overdevelopment of Sperlonga. Yet he never misses Italy's ironic or miraculous aspects, even when he is describing its catastrophes—like the chronic earthquakes plaguing the coastal town of Pozzuoli, which, over time, heaved a submerged Roman temple out of the sea.

The Moon by Whale Light, by Diane Ackerman (*Random House, $20*).

This hard-core adventuress likes to view her subjects up close. She straddles alligators in St. Augustine and swims with whales in Patagonia, rubs elbows with penguins in the Antarctic and invites an African bat to tangle in her long hair. Throughout these essays, Ms. Ackerman is attuned to the ways in which "life hangs on in such out-of-the-way places, pushes on with such ingenuity and bravado."

Father Must, by Rick Rofihe (*Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $18.95*).

Brief, mostly first-person stories about the riddles of communication and the grammar of loneliness. An immigrant repairman is unable to describe his Mexican childhood to his new wife; an old woman loses her favorite elm to her children's satellite dish; a near-deaf violinist marries to "bring the world in a little closer." Mr. Rofihe's oblique narratives are coded messages, waiting to be deciphered.

American Steel, by Richard Preston (*Prentice Hall, $19.95*).

Hoping to give the Big Steel companies a run for their money, the Nucor Corporation broke ground in 1987 for a new plant in Crawfordsville, Indiana, gambling millions on the introduction of a revolutionary process for making sheet steel. Mr. Preston covered the plant's start-up from all possible vantage points: he teetered in the jaws of a crane above the site; trembled on the deck of the "melt shop" as tons of liquid steel roared into production; and knocked back a few at the Scoreboard Lounge, where the hot-metal men, a fascinating breed apart, go to drown their fears.

Proof of Life on Earth, by Roz Chast (*HarperCollins, $8.95*).

The proof, as delineated by the artist in the title cartoon, relies on the basics: an unopened jar of mayonnaise, some pocket lint, an eight-page letter from Aunt Bonnie describing Uncle Carl's operation. But in this collection Ms. Chast manages to levitate even the most familiar things to unexpected heights—like ordinary Alma, on her flying wall-to-wall carpet.

The Journals of John Cheever (*Knopf, $25*).

This selection from the writer's unpublished diaries spans more than three decades, ending just before his death, in 1982. It is an ongoing account of marital feuds and domestic triumphs, struggles with booze, longings for sex and God, dramatic shifts of weather and mood. On a June day, Cheever writes, "The world that was not mine yesterday now lies spread at my feet, a splendor." A few months later, an entire entry reads, "Autumn leaf fires. The cook is drunk. Children make a barricade of leaves. Frost has slaughtered the begonias."

American Stories, by Calvin Trillin (*Ticknor & Fields, $19.95*).

The fellow-citizens we meet in these pages have strong opinions about almost everything—the best way to cover the Miami crime beat, the best way to swallow and regurgitate embroidery needles for fun and profit. But whether the subject is a dispute over music royalties which begins in Washington Heights or a farm foreclosure in Nebraska which ends in a shoot-out, Mr. Trillin transforms American contentiousness into a deeply satisfying spectator sport.

The Riverkeeper, by Alec Wilkinson (*Knopf, $20*).

Three pieces about places where people make a living from the water: the narrow Provincetown harbor, where the fleet brings prosperity and tragedy alike to a clannish community of Portuguese fishermen; the polymorphous Hudson River, polluted by illegal dumping but also bursting with striped bass; and the defiant village of Angoon, on Admiralty Island, where the lore of the Tlingit Indians is fading but anger over the United States Navy bombing of the town a century ago is still fresh.

Lasting Impressions: Essays, 1961-1987, by V. S. Pritchett (*Random House, $19.95*).

Twenty-seven critical pieces, or "shorter evocations," as the author calls them. The writers evoked—and, mostly, celebrated—range from Sholom Aleichem to Mary Wollstonecraft.

What Work Is, by Philip Levine (*Knopf, $19*).

"You know what work is—if you're / old enough to read this you know what / work is, although you may not do it," says Mr. Levine, who came of age in Detroit in the forties. These darkly humorous poems are about people who, like the author, worked on the lines at Cadillac and Ford, fought fires, or polished plumbing parts. He prefers difficulty to beauty, but manages to convey both.

Stepping Westward, by Sallie Tisdale (*Holt, $21.95*).

In this physical and mental travelogue the Oregonian author pays homage to a profusion of people, places, and species: the pioneering botanist and avid diarist for whom the Douglas fir was named; the wild Klamath mountains; the melon-size mollusks in Puget Sound. She also expounds, with measured regret, on the practice of clear-cutting the forests, and contemplates the paradox of the "frontier," which had to be discovered and mined and settled by white people to be called a frontier at all.

A Model World and Other Stories, by Michael Chabon (*Morrow, $18.95*).

"At one time Harry and I shared everything; it is an error common to fast friendship," the narrator of "Millionaires" explains shortly before making love to Harry's girlfriend. Strains of such rueful, bacheloresque self-awareness run throughout these stories, about men of all ages who—to the reader's vexation and relish—cling to the central tenet of adolescence: they refuse to be naïve, but desire to remain so.

Par Avion, by Sempé (*Knopf, $21*).

A running commentary on life in this city in the form of illustrated letters from a wide-eyed Frenchman, Jean-Paul Martineau, to a friend back home in Paris. Unlike Jean-Paul, his creator—ever alert and pen in hand—lets nothing get by him: wonders or delights, foibles or fatuities. Translated from the French by Helen Graves.

Once More Around the Park, by Roger Angell (*Ballantine, $18.95*).

A selection from Mr. Angell's earlier baseball books, with some welcome additions, including a fond portrait of the late Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti and an examination of Hollywood's infatuation with baseball. The tone of the book is more reportorial than nostalgic, but certain players and campaigns from the past shine with particular vividness—among them Steve Blass and Dan Quisenberry, and the doomed World Series quests of the Red Sox in '75 and '86.

The Incubator Ballroom, by John Rolfe Gardiner (*Knopf, $20*).

A novella and four stories, set in rural Virginia and prickling with the suggestion of trespassed borders—territorial, social, and sexual. In the title piece, a Roanoke society family dabbles in farming: the tomboyish daughter takes over the management of three hundred acres while her father sits in the house translating Catullus. Many of Mr. Gardiner's characters share this heroine's willfulness, which she flaunts during a family reunion by seducing her first cousin, leading him "right through love's dictionary, lingering at startling entries."

Movie Love: Complete Reviews, 1988-1991, by Pauline Kael (*Dutton, $24.95*).

Among the movies appraised are "My Left Foot," "Henry V," and "Driving Miss Daisy." The love here recorded is ardent but not blind: Miss Kael's vision remains twenty-twenty, and comeuppances abound.

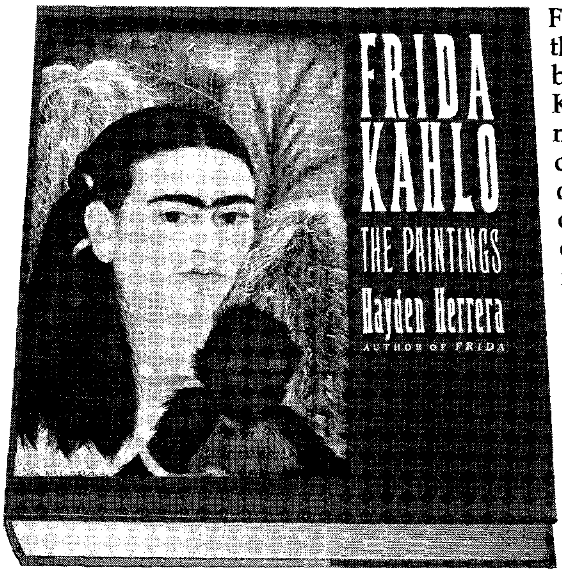
5001 Nights at the Movies, by Pauline Kael (*Holt, $22.50*).

Short movie notes, the bulk of which first appeared anonymously—fooling no one—in Goings On About Town. This encyclopedic collection has been newly expanded, and includes the films of the nineteen-eighties.

Goodbyes and Other Messages, by Whitney Balliett (*Oxford, $22.95*).

Jazz being now in a "recollective state," as the author says, there is a scattering of obituaries in this collection of short pieces, written between 1981 and 1990. But the tone is elegiac with a difference, as Mr. Balliett continues to celebrate the music and those—the quick and the dead—who have made it.

FRIDA KAHLO
An artist for our time



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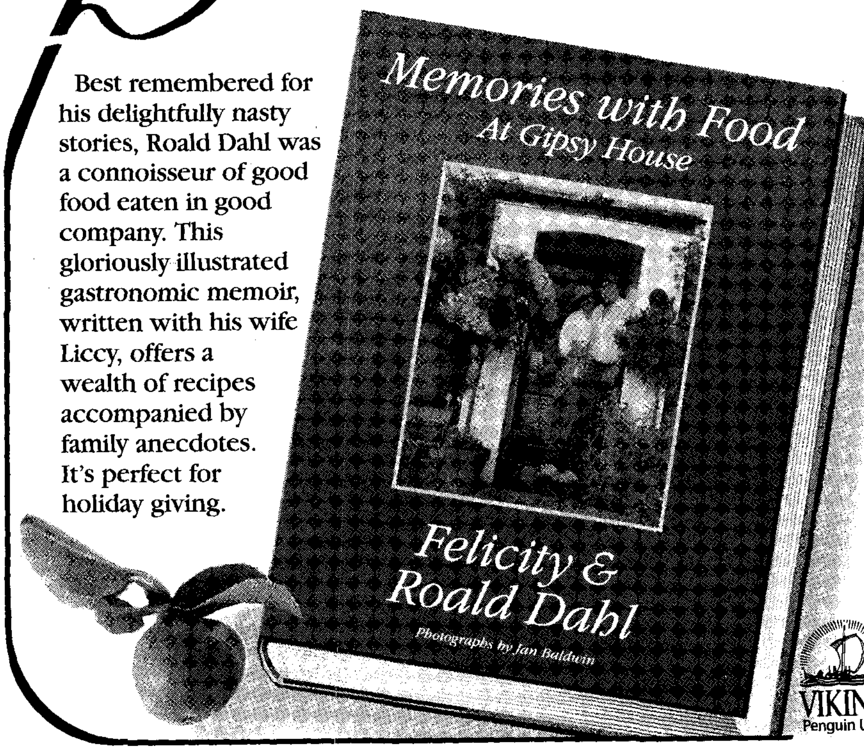
Best remembered for his delightfully nasty stories, Roald Dahl was a connoisseur of good food eaten in good company. This gloriously illustrated gastronomic memoir, written with his wife Liccy, offers a wealth of recipes accompanied by family anecdotes. It's perfect for holiday giving.



VIKING
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Counsel to the President: A Memoir, by Clark Clifford, with Richard Holbrooke (*Random House, $25*).

Mr. Clifford, a St. Louis lawyer, came to the Truman White House in 1945 as a lowly naval assistant. Before long, he was virtually running the place—coördinating programs and policies that gave us the Defense Department, the National Security Council, the C.I.A., and the goal of containing Communism. His objectives suffered their severest rebuke in the Vietnam War—a conflict he attempted to end while serving as Johnson's Secretary of Defense in 1968. This engrossing account of Mr. Clifford's political life preserves a world that, with the collapse of Soviet Communism, is fast disappearing.

Wilderness Tips, by Margaret Atwood (*Doubleday, $20*).

These stories, mostly about women navigating the treacherous shoals of middle age, often hinge on the importance of history, both upper- and lowercase: a summer-camp sexual melodrama of the nineteen-fifties is reassessed through the lens of the following decade; the recovered corpse of a doomed Arctic explorer brings to mind a dead friend. One woman rewrites the past for her own convenience, while another is forced to revise her memories against her will, but all Ms. Atwood's characters carry the burden of choices yet to be made.

Thurber on Crime, edited by Robert Lopresti, with a foreword by Donald E. Westlake (*Mysterious Press, $18.95*).

The notion of criminality informing this anthology is highly elastic, and allows the inclusion not only of "The Catbird Seat," Thurber's famous tale of a murder happily bungled, but also of his whimsical illustrations for an edition of Poe's "The Raven" and a long article he once wrote about bloodhounds. The arrangement is an excuse, in other words, for demonstrating Thurber's ability to find humor in just about anything.

Odd Jobs: Essays and Criticism, by John Updike (*Knopf, $35*).

Further evidence that Mr. Updike is no ordinary mortal. Among his recent offerings we find an introduction to Kafka's "Complete Stories," a few words on pop music, a reflection on the female body, and dozens of book reviews that have appeared in this magazine, on writers as disparate as Iris Murdoch and Junichiro Tanizaki. Though the breadth here is remarkable, the reader may take most pleasure in the small flourishes, as when the author remembers William Dean Howells as "a genial broad valley between Mark Twain and Henry James," or says, of his mother's voice on the telephone, "I hear how festive and limpid her wit is, with what graceful and modest irony she illuminates every corner of her brave life."

The Way We Live Now, by Susan Sontag, illustrated by Howard Hodgkin (*Noonday Press / Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $35*).

"At first he was just losing weight, he felt only a little ill, Max said to Ellen, and he didn't call for an appointment with his doctor, according to Greg . . . but he did stop smoking, Tanya pointed out." So begins this story about a group of New Yorkers who come together in support of a friend who has AIDS; glimpsing the abyss, they spin a great net of words in which to catch themselves and one another. Accompanying Ms. Sontag's story is a set of beautifully produced etchings by Mr. Hodgkin; all royalties from the collaboration are being given to AIDS charities.

The World of Charles Addams, with an introduction by Wilfrid Sheed (*Knopf, $30*).

A festival of Addams: three hundred cartoons and twenty-four covers by the Master.

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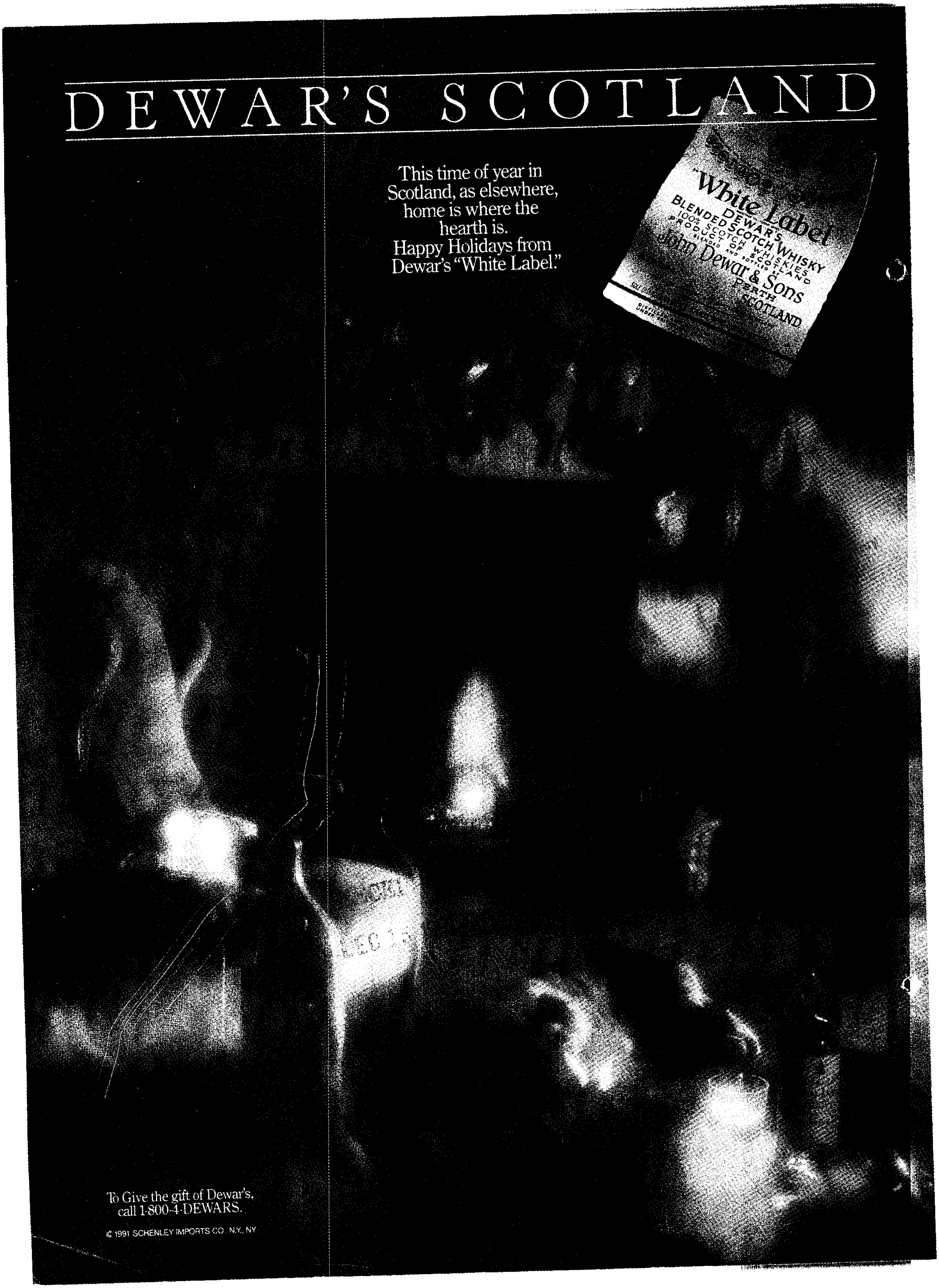
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